

Horrer in Culture & Entertainment

RUE MORQUE

EVIL POISONS THE WOODS
OF NEW ENGLAND

The Witch

INSIDE THE MUCH-HYPED HORROR MOVIE
Plus STACY SCHIFF'S
THE WITCHES OF SALEM, 1692



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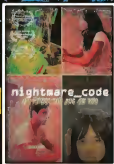
R.I.P. 2015
THE BEST AND WORST
2016 FILM FESTIVAL
and **CONVENTION GUIDE**

JAPAN'S CHILLING
SUICIDE
FOREST
and **THE NEW FILM ABOUT IT**

THRILL OF
THE KILL
BOOKS ABOUT REAL
VIOLENCE AND VOYEURISM

RUE MORQUE'S DARK CABINOL • PETER STRAU • THE MOST DANGEROUS GAME • SLASHER FILM FESTIVAL STRATEGY

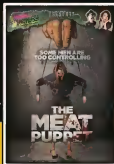
LOOK AT ALL THE



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E INDIE HORROR



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**WATER
IS THE NEED**

**WAR
IS THE ANSWER**

**"HARKING BACK IN STYLE TO SUCH
SCIENCE FICTION ACTION MOVIES AS
APEX OR PROTOTYPE"**

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Scarelessly combining folkloric religious hysteria with terrifying fairy-tale mythology, *The Witch* earns its reputation as one of the best movies about black magic ever made.

PLUS: Mark Karmali, who composed the music for *The Witch*, shares the ingredients for a spellbinding score; Stacy Schiff's *The Mothers: Salem, 1692*, and more
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NOTE FROM UNDERGROUND

The first horror story I was ever told came courtesy of my grandmother, who dazzled my pre-naptime ears with a lull tale that involved child abandonment, kidnapping, imprisonment, cannibalism, murder, immolation and witchcraft! Oh, and candy, because it was the story of Hansel and Gretel. I had a lot of questions for her about the nature of the gingerbread house ("Um, what happens when it rains?") and was only nominally concerned about the bag because in the friendlier version of the fairy tale that I was told, the witch wasn't sorry as much as she was pitifully foolish, getting duped by a couple of kids into being burned alive in her own oven.

Witches didn't become frightening until *The Blair Witch Project* came along, specifically the 44-minute made-for-TV companion piece *The Game of the Blair Witch*, a faux investigative documentary about the legend of *The Blair Witch* (aka a Elly Kewford), which aired just before the film opened in North America. The fictional mythology has her accused of witchcraft and, in 1795, left out in the woods during the winter to die. The film shows an authentic-looking woodcut image of her tied to a wigwag in the forest (pictured), and it really stuck with me because it places the event firmly within that era, doing right in with authentic woodcuts depicting "witches" being tortured, hung, burned at the stake and enduring other atrocities.

There has long been talk of a *Blair Witch* prequel, and Robert Eggers' *The Witch* is what I imagined that film to be like. The attention to detail — notably the Jacobean English spoken by the characters — creates a world where repressed magic practiced by agents of Satan is plausible. Because it's set around the time of the most famous witch hunt in North American history, the Salem Witch Trials of 1692, it invokes the shadow of that period without ever acknowledging those events. Simultaneously, it gives that world's Ennemi's fairy tale-style witch (who lives in the forest, wears a cloak, uses poison apples, etc.).

The common factor in both the fairy tale witch stories and the historical witch case is something that doesn't get discussed that much, but I feel equally debating: the role of children.

The witch in "Hansel and Gretel" wants to eat the kids. Elly Kewford for her ghostly abducts and kills them; and children in Salem looked out the witch once — resulting in numerous people hanged and one crushed to death — when two pretense girls had "fits" that were deemed demonic. Children of Salem were also accused of witchcraft during the trials, including four-year-old Dorothy Good, who confessed to being a witch after other children claimed she was "deranged," and in turn accused her mother of "consorting" with the Devil.

In *The Witch* Eggers shows us the monotony of the Puritan family, when the children start accusing each other of devilry and the parents bay into it and lock them up. And don't forget, Hansel and Gretel only meet a witch because they were abandoned in the forest by their parents, who can no longer feed them. And if you look closely at the Blair Witch woodcut you'll see a child helping the spirits leave Kewford to die. Rejecting one's upbringing, making kids commit to terrible acts, and murdering them (during child "witches" alive was not uncommon during the European witch crusades), have long been an aspect of witch lore that has been mostly sanitized in modern horror stories. We believe in childhood innocence, as Eggers explains in his interview, careful steps were taken to shield the underage actors from the dark things their characters are involved with in the film. As both real and fictional accounts of witchcraft bear out, however, that concept of childhood innocence is relatively new. I imagine how I would've felt as a kid if my peers and parents turned on me and it given me a shiver.

In the 1980 book *A History of Witchcraft: Sorcerers, Heretics & Pagans*, which I studied in a university course about witchcraft (before you ask, no, I didn't cut class to play quidditch), authors Jeffrey B. Russell and Brooks Alexander explain, "Fundamentally, the witch-craze was one particular form in human nature, the desire of human beings to deflect evil on others, define them as outsiders and then punish them harshly."

Anyone with an Internet connection knows that we still do this, even if we use flame wars as opposed to real flames. To stretch the metaphor, we may see it in a global village, but the villagers are just as eager to hunt witches as they were 400 years ago. Whether it's Donald Trump scapegoating Muslims and Syrian refugees, or simply commenters on the *Blue Allegiance* Facebook page making horribly misogynistic remarks about a teenage female filmmaker, things haven't changed that much. And with increasing cases of teen and even preteen suicides resulting from cyberbullying, children are more enmeshed in witch hunts than ever.

What has changed is the role of the supernatural. Witch hunts generally no longer occur because we fear black magic and Satan (in North America, anyway). I just can't figure out if that's a step forward because it forces us to no longer blame supernatural forces beyond our control, or a step back because our propensity to deflect that evil on others now seems so limitless.

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RUE MORGUE #142 is dedicated to Summer Henson. R.I.P.

COVER: THE WITCH

Design by Andrew Wright

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POST MORTEM

COMMENTS • QUESTIONS • CRITICISM



GREAT KRAMPUS artwork on the December edition of *Rue Morgue*!

@DREADDOMNEWS, VIA TWITTER

RHAPS2 LOOKS to be another good issue, been reading *Rue Morgue* for seventeen months now, it's really consistent, not read a bad issue yet

@ADIANAL, VIA TWITTER

A BIT FLABBERGASTED by this — the first print review of one of my stories was a major publication (*RMP160*)! This is the story I'm reading from tonight at Powell's Books on Hawthorne (in Portland, Oregon). Thank you, *Rue Morgue* magazine

NATHAN GARDEN, VIA FACEBOOK

JUST READ the article on 50 Essential Horror Albums in *RMP160*. It was very interesting, but I have to make a correction on the review of the *Monster Mash* album by Bobby "Boris" Pickett. The "Monsters Holiday" cut was not part of the original album on Garpax. It was released as a single in December of 1962. It was later released as a "bonus" track on the CD reissue of the LP. Love your magazine.

HANK FRITAS • SANTA ROSA, CALIFORNIA

I LOVED THE 50 Essential Horror Albums list in *RMP160*. I really appreciated it because it wasn't just "Halloween" music, but great music with a dark vibe. However, I'm shocked at some of the omissions! I mean, Wednesday 13? How is not one of his albums on the list? No *Transylvania 6-210* or *Ping Pong*? I thought for sure they'd be on there. I'm sure many realized that he wasn't included. Another album that I think deserves to be on there is *Sharon Needles' PG-13*. With awesome tracks like "David Girls Never Say No" and "Call Me on the Gays Board." I think it would have made a great addition. Not shocked at her omission because she isn't very popular, but still a good suggestion. Otherwise, loved it! Thanks!

JOHNNY • NEW YORK

BEEN SKYING *RMP160* all month to read on the perfect night! Halloween! So stoked to dive in and make my night a little more spooky! Thanks for your always excellent coverage of all things creepy, scary and downright nasty

TIA BOWDEN, VIA FACEBOOK

I AM A RESIDENT of Salem, Massachusetts, and I am honoured you mentioned us on your homepage. So-

lers is our own Halloween town and it's always sad when it's over. Thanks for representing!

JAMIE THORN, VIA FACEBOOK

RUE MORGUE LIBRARY Number 5, *Cryptic Collectibles*, has totally activated my inner hoarder — I want it.

@ANDREMGJANS, VIA TWITTER

THANK YOU, RUE MORGUE, for getting me in this amazing issue of creepy keepsakes! If you love horror and collect creepy stuff, *Cryptic Collectibles* is for you! It's packed with tons of nostalgic horror. Kudos on the print choice — classic goodness

@RETROGAND, VIA INSTAGRAM

THE COVERS of *Rue Morgue* magazine, both the photographic and original art type, have been such amazing eye candy over the years that I think it's high time you celebrated that fact with a commemorative poster. One poster featuring the 100 best covers as voted by the fans. Have the images all lined up side-by-side and row-by-row so that we can see them in all their glory right there in front of us. Take my money now!

ED "BRACKENSTEIN" LUSKY
— EURLINGTON, ONTARIO



TRAVELS, RUE MORGUE! Victoria Price just might be the sweetest woman on the planet. She really is a joy! Had such an amazing time tonight [at the Evening with Victoria Price event].

@TERRADWAS, VIA TWITTER

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EXPIRING MINDS

ON RUE MORGUE'S FACEBOOK PAGE

What do you love most about Connor Hansen's portrayal of *Leatherface* in the original *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*?

He looked people for survival, not sport, and to me that takes the honor of it to another level

DAVID CASE JR.

Love the chalkboard scene in *docs*

BARRY WILKINSON

His perfect blend of childlike innocence and interlocking unpredictability, which was never portrayed as well in the sequels

MICHAELA D'AVOIA

His '60s! Although he's busy with his killing, *Leatherface* still wants to look cooler

KAREN ZEPEDA

I love the fact that he is genuinely upset and scared when he sees strangers. He really has no concept of good or evil, he only knows what his family told him

KATE AGRAWAL

He's a Texan!

ALFRED E. LOPEZ

His most excellent pursuit capabilities! RIP, Connor

JARED KHAN

POST MORTEM

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Treadlines



NEWS HIGHLIGHTS — HORROR HAPPENINGS

GEORGE BARRIS, CREATOR OF THE MUNSTERS' DRAG-U-LA, DIES AT 89

On November 5, 2015, custom car creator George Barris drove off into the sunset at the age of 89, leaving behind a legacy of hot rods and iconic vehicles beloved by not just the horror community, but the world of pop culture as a whole. Among the vehicles he designed were the Batmobile from the '60s Batman television series, as well as the Munsters' Koach and DRAG-U-LA, the latter of which inspired the Rob Zombie song "Dragula."

Posting a picture of the Koach on Instagram following Barris' passing, Zombie wrote, "George Barris the man [who] built this amazing car has died. I thank him for his coolness of letting me borrow the Munsters Koach on more than one occasion."

Additionally, in a statement from DC Entertainment, co-publisher and artist Jim Lee said, "Growing up I wanted to fight crime just so I could drive George's Batmobile.... There was no greater thrill than getting to sit in that Batmobile from my childhood."

Barris got his start in California in the early 1950s customizing his own cars, eventually starting Barris Kustom Shop. His unique creations caught the eyes of Hollywood executives, who commissioned him to work on their own personal vehicles. Before long, he was working on automobiles for various background set pieces on films.

"George was really hooked into pop culture, especially in the '60s through the '80s, when a lot of current artists grew up," notes artist Shag (aka Josh Agle). "The pop surrealism and lowbrow art movements have been heavily influenced by car culture, movies and television, and George's vehicles were prominent in all of those



things. The 1963 exhibit at the Laguna Art Museum, Kustom Kulture, inspired a lot of artists, including me, and let us know that something that was previously seen as low or unacademic could be accepted by the fine art world."

In 1965, Barris created what would arguably become his most enduring work, the Batmobile. Work on the car was first offered to custom creator Dean Jeffries in late 1965, but when Jeffries balked at the producer's request to have a car ready for January 1966, Barris was brought in for the job, for which he utilized a 1965 Lincoln Futura concept car. The Batmobile would be used for three seasons and one Batman movie, with Barris retaining ownership of the vehicle, which was valued at the time

at \$125,000. Nearly fifty years later, in January 2013, Barris sold the Batmobile at auction for \$4.2 million.

Along with The Munsters Koach and DRAG-U-

LA (which was allegedly built from an actual coffin), Barris also worked on cars for The Beverly Hills Cop and Knight Rider, while also designing custom novelty vehicles for celebrities, such as golf carts for Elton John and Bob Hope, antelope modifying cars for Elvis Presley (a Cadillac limousine) and John Wayne (custom Pontiac station wagons).

Prior to his death, Barris and Shag were planning on collaborating together, something the artist hopes will still come to fruition.

"I was just starting work on a limited edition silk screen print that both George and I would sign and number," says the artist. "It would be Shag's take on George's career, and was to be released simultaneously at his shop and at the new Shag Store on Melrose Avenue. George really liked the magazine cover I'd done for Banzai Magazine a few years ago, which featured him in all his 1970s glory. I think I'll continue with the project, and maybe we can release it as a tribute to him."

ANDY BURRIS



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GUILLERMO DEL TORO TO HEADLINE NEW *RUE MORGUE* EXPO

After ending the Festival of Fear horror convention in Toronto last year, Rue Morgue has officially launched Dark Carnival, a new Horror Culture and Entertainment Expo, in the neighbouring city of Hamilton. Co-presented with Anchor Bay Entertainment, the event will take place the weekend of July 9 and 10, 2016 at the Hamilton Convention Centre in the city's downtown core. According to Rodrigo Gudiño, Rue Morgue's president, Dark Carnival is essentially a reinvention and expansion of the Festival of Fear, which was part of Toronto's Fan Expo for seven years. Although Fan Expo attracted a large audience, it was not tailored to horror fans.

"Dark Carnival is the show I wanted the Festival of Fear to be right from the beginning," he explains.

The expo will be headlined by Guillermo del Toro, writer/director of *Melroy Place*, *Pen's Lady* and *Conan*. *Peak* The first wave of guests announced also includes Bill Moseley (*The Texas Chainsaw Massacre 2*, *House of 1000 Corpses*) and Mitch Markowitz, producer and co-star of the iconic Hamilton-shot monster kid show *The Hilarious House of Frightenstein*.

"This won't be like Fan Expo or the Comic Con I go to, which focus on a broader appeal," Markowitz says. "This will be targeted to horror and supernatural fans."

While still in the planning stages, Gudiño says the new horror expo will provide an immersive, interactive experience.

"We want people to be entertained right off the bat before buying anything or purchasing autographs," he says. "And the show is not called Dark Carnival just because it's a cool-sounding name... fans will feel like they're literally entering a horror carnival."

Guests, performers, panels and exhibitors will hail from the world of horror books, films, comics, visual art, and more. Gudiño says even such things as paranormal literature and investigations fit under Dark Carnival's large, macabre tent.

The show will also include artist guests, so far Rue Morgue's artist gallery co-owner and freelance illustrator/designer "Ghoult" Gary Pulis, painter/illustrator Jason Edmonson and multi-media artist and musician Vincent Marcove of My Pet Squirrel have been announced.

"We're certainly looking at some interesting people who will add another element to the



show," says Gudiño, "but Rue Morgue has always represented the genre in a wide way — we are very inclusive, and look far outside the lines of the latest horror TV show or movie."

Hamilton was chosen for the debut event because organizers wanted something outside of Toronto but still accessible to the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) and nearby regions such as Niagara, Guelph and London. The show is also closer to the American border, and one of the goals is to bring in new vendors that haven't done the convention circuit in southern Ontario, particularly ones from the US who haven't made a convention appearance in Canada yet.

Dark Carnival is "a gift" for pure horror fans, says Susan Curran, head of marketing and acquisitions for Anchor Bay Canada. "The mainstream conventions are more and more catering to families, making it difficult for genre fans to find what they love."

Markowitz is a long-time collaborator with Rue Morgue and co-starred in Gudiño's 2012 feature film *The Last Man and Testament of Rosalind Leigh*, alongside Vanessa Redgrave. He says the Canada-based, international horror entertainment brand is well positioned to pioneer the ground-breaking Expo, and notes that the show is by fans, for fans, which includes himself.

"I get to appear with Guillermo, the most famous man behind the camera in the horror genre in the world," he says. "I am so excited about the upcoming premiere of Dark Carnival... I can't sleep at night."

For more details on Dark Carnival, go to darkcarnivalego.com or [facebook.com/darkcarnivalego](https://www.facebook.com/darkcarnivalego). Additional guests and programming announcements will be made in the coming months. To inquire about vending at the expo, contact Jody Infante at jody@rue-morgue.com.

CHRIS LACKNER



ARROW VIDEO ANNOUNCES AMERICAN HORROR PROJECT

The 1970s was one of the most inventive periods for horror cinema, especially for filmmakers working outside of the Hollywood system: in addition to emerging regional talent such as Tobe Hooper, David Cronenberg and Wes Craven, hundreds of other directors were making noteworthy independent efforts at the time, some of which will be collected in Arrow Video's newly announced *American Horror Project Volume 1* box set. The first volume, due in late February, features a trio of otherwise widely driven treats: scuzzy acid trip *Malabuta's Carnival of Blood* (1973), Matt Cimber's psychosexual thriller *The Witch Who Came from the Sea* (1976) and the surreal parental panic of *The Proprietor* (1976), all of which are set to make their Blu-ray debut.

"There's something particularly alluring about the sort of regional, independent genre films that was being produced in the US during this period," says Brian Cant, producer of Arrow's *American Horror Project* set. "Much more than studio films, these productions are a product of the circumstances in which they were made—often by filmmakers with a lot of ambition and heart, but not necessarily money at their disposal."



These films had to innovate in their own ways, and that independent spirit makes these films very intriguing."

Cant notes that the inspiration for the set is periodically due to *Alphamaze* USA author Stephen Thrower, whose book offers an in-depth look at the regional horror boom.

"Stephen is the leading authority in this area, so naturally when he came to us with a few suggestions for titles that he felt were deserving of the Arrow treatment, we jumped at the chance. Stephen already had a relationship with many of the filmmakers, having interviewed them back when he was working on his book."

Aside from new extras produced with Thrower's participation, *American Horror Project Volume 1* features fresh transfers created especially for the box set. Arrow is hoping that sales will justify releasing future volumes in what may prove to be a groundbreaking collection.

"There's an element of film preservation," says Cant. "For many genre movies of this period, the original film materials have either been destroyed or lost. We want to make sure that these movies are preserved to the best possible standard to be enjoyed by future generations of genre fans."

FALL CIRCLE

ENTRAILS

Summer hitman, best known for playing Leatherface in *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, died November 7 in Naue of age 68, from pancreatic cancer. Born in Reykjavik, Iceland, he immigrated to the US at age five. While at the University of Texas, in Austin, Hansen met director Tobe Hooper and writer Kim Henkel, and they created 1974's *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*. Hansen, a favorite of the horror convention circuit, also appeared in horror films *Massacre* (1985) and *Reykjavik* (1985).



and *Walking Maniac* (2009), and suffered two strokes, 1990's *Edge of Fear: A Journey to America's Darkest Places* and his 2013 memoir, *Chaos Slowly Unfolding: How We Made the World's Most Notorious Movie*.

Actor and former United States Senator Fred Thompson died on November 1, at age 73, after suffering a recurrence of lymphoma. Thompson was best known for his long-running role as O.A. Arthur Branch on NBC's *Law & Order* franchise, but also appeared in Martin Scorsese's 1991 remake of *Cape Fear* and in 2012's *Sister*.

Thompson served as the US Senator from Tennessee from 1994 to 2003.

After a few false starts and a change in director, the motion picture adaptation of Stephen King's 1986 novel *It* is set to film this coming summer. According to an interview in *Mixter* with director Andy Muschietti (Alfred), who stepped into the role vacated by Gary Finklestein, earlier this year, it will be split into two features, with part one focusing on the main characters as children fighting against the demon shown known as Pennywise. *It* was previously adapted into a four-hour miniseries for ABC in 1990.

As work on the new *Twin Peaks* continues, the latest clutch of news brings back another familiar face. According to Deadline, Miguel Ferrer will reprise his role as FBI Agent Albert Rosenfield, who he portrayed during both seasons of the original series and in David Lynch's 1992 prequel film *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me*. Also rumored to be returning are Richard Beyner and David Patrick Kelly, who played the Horne brothers, Ben and Jerry.

Meanwhile, multiple reports have Jennifer Jason Leigh joining the series in an as-yet-unspecified role. The new season of *Twin Peaks* will debut in 2017.

Virtual reality headsets may still be in their infancy but that hasn't stopped the gear industry from jumping headfirst into the new technology. VirtualReality.com offers a sexual experience designed specifically for users of Oculus Rift, Samsung Gear VR and Google VR. Among the films up for grabs is a short with creepy blockbusts, sound effects and a blow job courtesy of a knife-wielding demon that comes right at you in a scene that doesn't exactly feature a happy ending.

Director Mick Garris, creator of the television series *Masters of Horror*, announced at the Mexican horror film festival Marboles the full lineup of directors for his new anthology film *Alphamaze: Genesis*. The roster includes Joe Dante (Gremlins), David Slade (30 Days of Night), Ryunosuke Kikushima (Witching Man: Front), Alejandro Bragas (Jaws of the Devil) and Garris himself. *Alphamaze: Genesis* will begin shooting in early 2016.

ANDY BURNS

MONSTRO BIZARRO

The BBC News recently reported that sightings of the Yeti have dramatically decreased in the remote villages of Shasta since the installation of electricity. Chendeb, one such village nestled among the Himalayas Mountains between China and India, noted this trend since a hydroelectric plant was installed seven years ago. Before that, "much of the day would be spent searching for firewood to light stoves and walking up into the high pastures to graze their yaks and goats," resulting in alleged sightings of incans or the creatures themselves. The villagers now cook with gas and spend more time growing crops. Older villagers remark that the costars is out there, but the decline in sightings leaves the younger generation wondering if the Yeti truly exists.

LYLE BLACKBURN

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CORONER'S REPORT

WEIRD STATS & MORBID FACTS

PAGE 163

In 2015, Mo'Nique Good, head of Iran's "bottoms" union, suffered spiky haircuts on the grounds that they were "divulge worshippers hairstyles." Solemn treatments and the plucking of eyebrows are also banned.

Director Robert Wise made his scariest horror film: *The Wrecking* (1963) in celebration to the memory of his mentor, Val Lewton, who had died twelve years earlier.

Linda Quane Jackson, 58, beat her boyfriend David Iles to death earlier this year by driving him in the head with a can of peas, a can of carrots and a can of chicken broth. If convicted, she faces life in state prison.

In order to prepare himself for his role as 1923's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, Ian Cheney conducted interviews with people who suffered from various physical deformities.

Last spring, Polish children from the town of Drylitz who went to a camp expecting to celebrate Lenin being weeping and screaming when the priest, 37-year-old Tamasz Mieczkowski, carried out a mass exorcism on the thousand pupils present.

All of the songs featured in *Jahannam: An American Werewolf in London* have the word "moon" in their titles.

In October, a California man was torched by his car during a freeway accident in which he was wearing a seat belt. His corpse came to a rest on an overhead rail sign.

A man in Shanghai filed a lawsuit against actress Zhao Wei, one of the country's biggest movie stars, for her part in the show *Tiger Wang*, in which "according to the suit, she stared at the defendant through his TV set 'too intensely' and caused him 'spiritual damage'."

Rudi Zaretsky, 35, of Beavercreek, an ignoble end after he took some crystal meth and crawled through a field grabbing like a pig. He was shot dead by a hunter who mistook him for a bear.

Allen Schwartz's much-loved children's book series *Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark* held a top ten spot on the American Library Association's annual list of most-challenged books for the better part of twenty years due to its "violence."

Sarah Schuck, 50, of Maryland allegedly poured the skin off her feet and put it into her roommate's milk. She was charged with felony poisoning and assault after her roommate coughed up the skin while having a drink.

Richard Franklin, self-published author and peevish winner of the British game show *Countdown*, pleaded guilty in November to traveling 500 miles in order to hit a reviewer over the head with a wine bottle after she criticized his novel online.

When self-styled prophet Shemane Kanyama of Zimbabwe was called in to help cleanse a family home of evil spirits, he told them he could only summon his healing powers by being buried alive. When he failed to rise, the soil was removed and he was found dead. Five members of the family were charged with murder.

COMPILED BY NORMAN HOBBS AND AMANDA S. KOBLEY
AND A WEIRD STAT BY NORMAN HOBBS. SEND IT TO: STRANGE@NYC.COM

BODY HORROR

YOO-SOOTH HALF-SLEEVE

ARTIST: Lucas Englebert (@englebert_019)

"My friend wanted a half-sleeve of Yoo-Sooth — a perfectly unorthodox (Lewiston) character. It was my job to interpret this character into a Japanese traditional style design to fit his skin. I was excited to do this because I like him as a fan of horror, Lewiston, and dark, stylized tattooing."

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UNGODLY GOATSPLOITATION



1. THE DEVIL'S RAIN
BOVIEAE BURGANE
2. ALTERED STATES
SEVEN EYED CRUCIFIED BEAST
3. THE WITCH
PURITAN PUNCTURING BLACK PHILLIP
4. THE ANTICHRIST
BLINDMAN RIM-JOB
5. DRAG ME TO HELL
SEANCE GBS BAA AAB AAD
6. THE DEVIL RIDES OUT
BRING ON BAPHOMET



TORTURED TAGLINE

HONEYMOON OF ECSTASY
1962-63 (1964)

"A HONEYMOON OF ECSTASY
TURNS INTO A NIGHTMARE."

FINAL WORDS



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EMILY EDWARDS
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CRYPTIC
COLLECTIBLES

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an action feature; for example, Lurch's released "creaky wires" from Morticia's sleeves). Figures of Wednesday and Cousin Itt were also planned, but never produced. Still-wanted figures go for \$10 to \$20 apiece on eBay.

JAMES BURNELL

MORE CRYPTIC COLLECTIBLES AT RUE-MORGUE.COM




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SEAMLESSLY COMBINING HISTORICAL RELIGIOUS HYSTERIA WITH
TERRIFYING FAIRY-TALE MYTHOLOGY, THE WITCH EARNs ITS REPUTATION
AS ONE OF THE BEST MOVIES ABOUT BLACK MAGIC EVER MADE



the righteous and the wicked



by
DAVE ALEXANDER



THE FIRST HORROR STORIES MANY CHILDREN ARE EXPOSED TO ARE ABOUT WITCHES.

Whether in bedtime stories, Grimm's fairy tales or kids' cartoons, the legs in tales such as "Hansel and Gretel," "Snow White," "Sleeping Beauty," "Rapunzel" and "The Snow Queen" have great power and evil intent. They cast maléficient spells, change shape and imprison or — worse — kill children. And they usually live in the dark, dank forests where you can commune with nature.

They're part of ancient mythology in cultures throughout the world, but the ones from European folklore that form these tales become dangerous in the real world when incorporated into Christian beliefs. As the Bible commands in Leviticus 24:27, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." Whether or not these stories were actually created and wielded real power is irrelevant because the belief that witches were real and working on behalf of the Devil, against God and his followers, was enough to spark a hysteria that resulted in an estimated 35,000 to 100,000 accused witches being tortured and executed between 1450 and 1750, usually by being hanged, drowned or burned alive at the stake.

As Europeans came to the New World, so did their Old World beliefs, resulting in more paranoia, hysteria and death — though not nearly to the degree as in countries such as England and Germany. This is where *The Witch* (out February 26 from Universal) unfolds. In 17th-century New England, around the time and place of the infamous Salem Witch Trials that saw twenty people accused of witchcraft (almost all of them women) hanged, or in one case, pressed to death slowly under rocks.

The first feature by Robert Eggers, who grew up in New England, *The Witch* tells the story of a Puritan family cast out of its village over the father's disagreement with Church/government officials. William (Ralph Ineson) brings his wife Katherine (Kirsten Dunst), daughter Thomasin (Anya Taylor-Joy), son Caleb (Harvey Scrimshaw), twins Jonas (Lucas Dawson) and Nancy (Elle Fanning), and a newborn into the wild to start a new life. As the family builds a modest farm beside the shadowy woods, the baby disappears while in Thomasin's care. Something or someone in the forest has targeted the newcomers and soon Caleb disappears too, only to stumble home later, delirious and sick. As more bad omens appear, such as livestock giving birth instead of milk, the family members start accusing each other of witchcraft. A sinister black goat horrifies even more, and as Thomasin struggles to make sense of it all and defend herself against accusations of heresy, we learn that it isn't the case of mere religious hysteria but actual witchcraft working against them.

Witchendriest Eggers creates a world where the struggle against nature, human nature and supernatural evil steadily coarsens to the point of madness. The beautifully muted landscape is slowly infected by evil, borne out in fairy-tale symbolism — a crimson cloak, a forbidden red apple and, ultimately, blood. Yet, instead of creating a stylized fairy-tale movie, the filmmaker opted for harsh realism. You can almost feel the cold of encroaching winter in a place carved out of the dark New England woods.

Actually Northern Delaware isn't in the year; the Puritans' farm is meticulously constructed in the style of the time, and the authentic Jacobean English dialogue places the viewer absolutely in an era where superstition reigned.

With a cryptic, otherworldly soundtrack by Mark Iannoni (see p. 32) over top of it all, *The Witch* has a cloistered, breathless quality to it, where the very air seems to suffocate as diabolical forces drain the hope — and life — out of the doomed settlers. Eggers — whose influences range from Gustav Doré paintings to the Salem witchcraft museum — displays a rare craftsmanship in a first feature that has made *The Witch* one of the most talked-about festival movies in years. It's also one of the most harrowing. Branded as a "New England folktale," this is a film that winds back the archetype of the witch from popular modern portrayals of a cackling hag or sexy seductress to one of pure malevolence.

Shortly after *The Witch*'s opening at the 2015 Toronto International Film Festival last September, we sat down with the intelligent, well-spoken Eggers to discover what ingredients he used to cast his eerie cinematic spell.

THE WITCH

by Mike Flores-Felton

BY ROBERT EGGER



THE PRETTY DARK FILMS YOU'VE MADE, HANSEL AND GRETEL AND TELLTALE HEART, SUGGEST A STRONG INTEREST IN FAIRY TALES AND FOLKLORE STORIES. HOW DID YOU DEVELOP THAT INTEREST, AND HOW DID IT LEAD TO THE WITCH?

My interest in fairy tales, I don't know how that developed. I've always been into dark things: witches, vampires, ghosts, the dead and all that kind of stuff, as well as the past. Going to colonial Williamsburg (Virginia) as a kid was fun as hell for me — just as cool as going to Disneyland. [Laughs] I've very down to the past and I think there's a lot of weight that comes from that, it's very fertile. Understanding where we come from culturally, it's good to know about this stuff. The films that are being made today that ask interesting questions are generally science-fiction movies, which makes a lot of

sense because of how we're evolving culturally, but I'm more interested in going back in the past, and for whatever reason I always have been. With the short films, I made some screenplays that were all dark horror-y, bodyless-y weird kind of genre-less, strange, obscure things and people were not into them. With *The Witch*, I was trying to make something that could be an identifiably genre film that I wouldn't be sacrificing my values and wouldn't need to compromise. I thought I could do an original weaving of a horror story about witches that hadn't been seen in a long time.

WHEN YOU SAID "NOT SACRIFICING CERTAIN TRADITIONAL FILMMAKING," WHAT DO YOU MEAN SPECIFICALLY?

I grew up watching Hammer horror movies and Universal stuff. Black beyond that was too scary for me as a kid, even though I loved dark stuff. Honestly, Jesse and Freddy were way too scary for me and I just couldn't handle it. I'm more attracted to gothic literature and fairy tales. The tropes of horror genre films that need to be articulated to satisfy X, Y and Z I'm not particularly interested in. I'm interested in telling the story. I'm more influenced by Ingmar Bergman than I am any horror movie as far as how I'm communicating visually.

THERE'S ALSO A CONNECTION TO WHERE YOU GROW UP, RIGHT?

I'm from New England, and its past was always a big part of my consciousness. You're playing out in the woods and you know, because of school, what was going on there. You'd have to cross a colonial graveyard in the middle of the woods because it used to be a field, so witches were part of my imaginary playground with my friends. As someone who's not that old, you've got to go back to your roots and there's my childhood.

WHAT'S YOUR EARLIEST MEMORY OF BEING FRIGHTENED BY A WITCH?

Obviously the Wicked Witch of the West. My witch is very different than her, but if you remember when Auntie Em is in the crystal ball and the witch's face shows up? I was like "Fuck that!" and covered up my eyes, but in my mom's eye I could still see the witch. So the idea that you can't escape the witch was something really formative for me as a kid. Witches were in my dreams all the time, even as a grown-up, though since the movie got so much, interestingly enough. Before I wrote the script, I asked a lot of people, "Were you into witches as a kid?" and if they said yes, I'd ask why. Definitely, the theme that you can't escape the witch was something that came up a lot.

SOME PEOPLE TALK ABOUT HOW THEY HAD A TEACHER, OVERBEARING MOTHER OR SOME OTHER FEARFUL MATERNAL FIGURE IN THEIR LIVES THAT THEY'D TIED INTO THEIR FEAR OF WITCHES OR DEMONS. WAS THAT THE CASE WITH YOU?

No, certainly not. I have a very close relationship with my mom and as a kid it was all of bedtime and moonbeams. The anti-mother has to materialize in your unconscious if everything is sunny on top.



HOW HARD WAS IT TO PITCH A HISTORICAL HORROR FILM ABOUT PILGRIMS WHO SPEAK IN JACOBEAN ENGLISH?

It was a hard sell. I spent years trying to convince people that a pilgrim movie in Jacobean English was going to appeal to anybody today, so it's been super overwhelming with what's happened since Sundance. It was tough. [Laughs]

SO HOW DID IT GET MADE?

My initial producers, Jay Weir and Lars Knudsen of Paris and Labor [production company] and Jack Redmond, immediately got what I was trying to do. It wasn't a problem with them, but finding investors to get behind it [was difficult]. What I saw, and this is still true, was that by really trying to have this be a nightmare from the past — a pilgrim's nightmare uploaded into your brain — I think being transported to this place where witches were actually real to people was going to create something scarier. The archaic language is itself, the ingloriousness and the fact that it makes you try a little harder — that was going to be a part of the whole thing. The atmosphere of the 17th century itself is going to make this a more interesting, immediate and provocative horror film, and that's definitely the heart of *The Witch*.

THE PERIOD DIALOGUE IS STRONG. TELL ME ABOUT HOW YOU RESEARCHED THIS FILM TO GIVE IT THAT AUTHENTICITY.

I have a background in Shakespeare, so it wasn't intimidating or weird for me. I read 17th-century English for fun. I was into diaries, court records and any kind of primary source material to really feel the language. I studied some books to understand Jacobean grammar and I made my own sort of phrasebook, organizing phrases for different situations that I could pull from. Sometimes I was pulling



*Something Wicked This Way Comes: *Witch* stars Taylor-Joy senses something is out there in the forest, and a foreboding goat appears in the woods*

from diaries, sometimes it was tweaked, but it was a big process. I tried for it to be very naturalistic and not stylized. In this period, even lower classes were really into language. The English language was really exploding, and if you think about Shakespeare, Susan Glaspell enjoyed [his writing] but so did the poorest people — the Bible was pop culture! In New England, it was illegal not to teach your children how to read because the word of God was so important. So if you have people all the time studying this beautifully written book, you'll find a farmer's will or someone else's who was very lower class that is written quite beautifully — a little clunky, but there's a beauty to it.

YOU'RE DRAWING FROM TWO FILMS IN *THE WITCH*, *THE REINSTATE HISTORICAL WITCH OF SALAM-STYLE RELIGIOUS PARANOID AND GARDEN'S DARK TALE*, IN

TURN OF MINDS. HOW DO NOVOGRAPHS SUCH AS *A WITCH WITH A RED HOOD* FIT IN THE FOREST WHY COMBINE THE TWO?

When I was a kid, I went to Salem all the time. Every Halloween I went to the witch museum and I was always sort of disappointed that the witches weren't real. In Salem, the witches weren't real, but people believed in witches in the 17th century, so witches existed. We believe in numbers and science as absolutes, so that's God. That's where we are right now, but perhaps in the future people will look at us and say that we had a weird system. Creating a world where witches are real and understanding the world where witches were real, you realize that the early modern period, fairy tales and really were pretty much one in the same aside from some really extreme members of the witch-pantheon. People thought the little old schizophrenic lady down the street was really cutting up babies.

IN THE WITCHES: SALEM, 1692. PULITZER PRIZE-WINNING AUTHOR STACY SCHIFF INVESTIGATES AMERICA'S TINY REIGN OF TERROR

heretics and hysteria

SEAN PLUMMER

IF YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF THE 17th-century witch trials comes primarily from Arthur Miller's *THE CRUCIBLE*, Rob Zlotkin's movie *The Lords of Salem* or old episodes at TV's *Disturbed*, then, needless to say, you are labouring under certain delusions. For instance, none of the convicted were burned at the stake (they were hanged, one was crushed to death), not all were women (four men died) and the trials lasted just over a year, although many believe they went on much longer.

Published by Little, Brown this past October, Pulitzer Prize-winner Stacy Schiff's new book, *The Witches: Salem, 1692*, looks to dispel what she calls the "en-crusted mythology" surrounding America's first true crime story. She details not only what happened—in a nutshell, twenty New England residents were accused as witches in 1692—but why.

The former is a relatively straightforward matter to explain; the latter is a vastly more complex affair, involving political intrigues, sexual frustration, teenage hormones and the fear of the unknown. All of it, however, was predicated on the fact that Salem was a palpable reality in the lives of 17th-century Puritan colonists trying to make a life for themselves in the new world of America.

"If you don't believe in the Devil, you don't believe in God," says Schiff. "It's part and parcel of the religion, and is the bedrock of New England existence, and therefore so was the witch. So you are talking about a form of nature that is undeniable; there is no question as to its existence."

It was in January of 1692 when several local girls, including the infamous Abigail Williams (centuries later, the antagonist of *The Crucible*) started exhibiting strange behaviour, including unexplained fits and impossible confessions. They blamed their supposed bewitching on family members and strangers alike. A kangaroo court was convened and the hangings commenced in June. They did not stop until the following September.

Given their difficult, restrictive lives, Schiff says that she sometimes empathized with the accused, despite the fact that their accusations ripped many families apart.

"It's hard because on the one hand you feel deep compassion for them. On the other, you have to wonder at what point do they realize what they are committing? And that comes down to the question of how many of them are truly in anguish over something and under the spell of something and how much are they counterfeiting. At what point did authentic symptoms get wound up in someone else's agenda?"

The Witches: Salem, 1692 is the most recent in a long line of books to tackle what Schiff calls in her text "America's tiny reign of terror." Indeed, the trials have inspired songs, plays, movies, even videogames. She says that they will likely continue to do so for a long time.

"There is a terrific lack of closure there. We can't solve this particular locked-room mystery. So what do you do when you can't solve a locked-room mystery? You keep going at it from every possible direction to see if you can't somehow enhance your understanding of it. It's like [the question of] where is Amelia Earhart's airplane. You just keep going back to it, chewing and gnawing at because it's not something you can ultimately resolve."

Just as the Salem witch trials were an allegory for McCarthyism in *The Crucible*, Schiff believes the trials continue to serve an allegorical function in—and as a warning to—modern-day America.

"Particularly at times of enhanced national security or its localist times, when you have a terror threat or during political election cycles, that idea that you are being preyed upon by dark forces hits very close to home. It's not that America is exempt from that kind of thinking. We just don't assign it to witchcraft, we call it something else. And that really horrific, tribal instinct, that piling on that takes place in 1692, we still do it today."



WITCHCRAFT THROUGH THE AGES

THE LEGACY (1978)

Starring Katherine Ross, Sam Elliott, and Roger Daltrey

Directed by Richard Marquand

Written by Jeremy Singleton, Patrick Tilley and Paul Wheeler

Screen: Factory

Occultism was not a new theme in the horror genre in the '70s. Devil children were running rampant, a Wicker Man had already burned down and Dario Argento taught us that ballet school was no longer safe. So it's no surprise that we got *The Legacy*, an occult gem that seemed to have gotten lost in the onslaught.

The film follows couple Maggie (Katherine Ross) and Pete (Sam Elliott), American interior decorators who travel to England on the dime of a rich but mysterious benefactor who wants to hire them after their client in California dies under strange circumstances. They meet their new client, Jason Montelvo (John Standing), when he accidentally runs them off the road in his limo and invites them to stay the night at his mansion. Soon, more guests arrive—including one played by The Who singer Roger Daltrey—and are revealed to have shady reputations. Jason, who was perfectly fine hours ago, is now dying and is ready to call one of the guests his heir.

That's when people start kicking it in nasty, bizarre ways, including death by fireball and a shattered mirror. Maggie and Pete then discover Jason's parents were batmaniacs for practicing witchcraft and were burned at the stake. Maggie realizes that he's much older than he appears and has specific, diabolical plans for her.

If *The Legacy* had been made a year later, it might have been a straight slasher flick, as it nearly devolves into one during its climax of kills. Thankfully, it focuses more on the supernatural strangeness than the demise of the guests, leading to some of the film's best scenes, such as when Maggie and Pete try to escape the house by stealing a car and driving away, only to discover that all roads lead back to it.

The supernatural is fueled into almost every scene, as if everyone and everything in the film is under some kind of spell. Even when the couple first comes to the mansion, they seem so calm, so passive, that it makes the strange events and weird actions of Jason's staff all the more unsettling. An overly dramatic ending that would be more at home in a rom-com cements the idea that witches are waiting at the behest of Satan.

Despite this, *The Legacy* is a fun film, with interesting ideas and a cool execution. The spell it casts works so well that even when it's lifted, the after-effects still resonate.



BRETT MCNEILL

Witcher Red Cloak was a witch with a red cloak, and there are stories of witches giving children poison apples, before any written accounts of Snow White that I can access. These Grimm's fairy tales are very much in the mode, but I realized some of Grimm's fairy tales evolved from what was deemed reality.

THERE WAS ALSO MENTION ON THE INTERNET MOVIE DATABASE THAT IT WAS SPECIFICALLY BASED ON AN INCIDENT THAT HAPPENED BEFORE SALEM. Someone just said that, but it's not true. Certainly, there are the Goodwin children of Boston. Some things they said when they were possessed, pre-Salem, are said by the children in our film. Elizabeth Krapp was another teenage girl who had some demonic possession and I drew from her, but it's not a specific thing.

I ALSO NOTICED BMMT SEEMED TO BE SOME IMAGERY TAKEN FROM SOME OF THE GERMAN WALPURGENNACHT MYTHS. WERE YOU DRAWING FROM THOSE TYPES OF ART AND OLD MYSTICALLY TRADITIONS AS WELL?

Yeah, very much so. People overall talk about the quality of light [in the film] being like Rembrandt, but that's just kind of like using natural light and being in the 17th century... it just kind of happens. But as far as the witches stuff, outside Gustav Dore, Severin Ross, Hans Baldung Grien and Francisco Goya, big time, even though he's later period, but he was one of the best at articulating this stuff. We were definitely pulling from that. You're looking and you're like, "Oh, weird, that naked lady is holding some beads!" Oh, those are talismans. I didn't notice that before! It's pretty wild.

ONE OF THE THEMES THAT'S INHERENTLY INTERESTING ABOUT A STORY LIKE THIS IS THAT IT'S BOTH CRITICAL OF RELIGION, LOOKING AT THE DESTRUCTIVE POWER OF PEOPLE'S ATTITUDES, BUT AT THE SAME TIME IT'S AFFIRMING IT BECAUSE THERE'S REAL SUPERNATURAL EVIL IN THERE. A MESSAGE IN THE FILM OR A METAPHOR?

Look, whatever works for you, works for me. I don't want to be necessarily propagating any kind of message. I will say that it is funny though that I've seemed to offend Christians and Wiccans. [Laughs]

EVERYTHING OFFENDS EVERYONE NOW.

Everything offends everyone! I don't mean to be controversial religion. I wouldn't say that I support 17th-century English Puritanism, that's for damn sure, but I find it all very interesting and it's a part of what it is to be human.

FEAR OF WITCHES AND WITCHCRAFT IS OFTEN FRAMED AS A PATRIARCHAL CULTURAL REACTION TO WOMEN GAINING MORE POWER IN SOCIETY, THE WORKPLACE AND WITH THEIR SEXUALITY.

[Nods slowly.] Jungian psychology, Marie-Louise von Franz talks about the age of chastity in the Middle Ages and putting women on a pedestal and the cults of the Virgin Mary. People were finding a way to integrate the feminine into a Christian dogmatic society, unconsciously, but then when they realized that women on the planet Earth weren't these perfect virgins, then came burning all the witches. What's interesting about the early modern period is that really you have this thinking of female power as evil. Certain-





Old Scratch And New Blood: *Witchman* awakens to chaos on the farm. *William* (Ralph Ineson) suspects a goat evil has come for his family. (inset) director Robert Eggers, not oppositely Katherine (Kate Dickie) comes for her stricken son Caleb (Harvey Scrimshaw) after he disappears from the forest.

ly on the surface of things that's not how we talk about female power anymore, but the shadows are still there. I think that same people interpret *The Witch* as saying that female power is evil, which is totally not what I'm saying, obviously. But it's interesting to see how female power is interpreted in the film — a world where puritan society is real. The only power that exists is this kind of negative thing, and it's tragic. And that was only 400 years ago! So of course, even as we've progressed, we're still dealing with dark, fucked-up feelings that no one wants to have, but if it's stuff we've got to talk about and check out.

DO YOU CONVINCE YOURSELF A SUPERSTITIOUS PERSON?

I'm superstitious against my better nature. I have philosophies and systems of ontology that make sense to me and superstitious stuff that has nothing to do with that. I'm totally interested in the occult for sure. People can bring their own validity to it however much they want... I'm going to sound wackier than I would like, but there are things we don't understand and I think there's probably a way to articulate anything scientifically. That's also just something that's evolved through human history as metaphors and tools to articulate things we can't talk about.

HOW CLOSE TO ACTUAL ACCOUNTS OF WITCHHUNT ARE YOUR STORY ELEMENTS SUCH AS GOATS BEING AN OATH FOR THE DEVIL, THE POISONED APPLE, PEOPLE FLYING?

I didn't make up anything, it all comes from source material. I will say that's something I tried really hard to do, to keep this like English witchcraft and New England witchcraft, as opposed to continental witchcraft because there are differences. Some witch scholars would say, "You put some continental shit in there, buddy!" but I will say that any

brooches or garbs or things that we considered continental European stuff I found evidence of in English witchcraft before I put them in the film.

HOW HELLISH WAS IT TO STARE WITH A GOAT FOR THAT MANY DAYS?

The goat was the worst thing over in a million years, times 10. Weirdly, the hare and the rovers were awesome, but the goat was a complete nightmare.

GOATS CAN BE REAL DICKS, LET'S BE HONEST.

Stabbing as a goat is a thing, man!

REGARDLESS, THAT IMAGE OF A GOAT ON THE FILM'S POSTER IS ICONIC. DID YOU REQUIRE A SPECIFIC TYPE OF GOAT TO BE AUTHENTIC, OR SIMPLY ONE THAT LOOKED "DEVILISH"?

I really wanted a different kind of goat that was the period-specific one closest to what the English collected, but we shot the film in Canada and there were just none of them here. There was goat carting and we needed to find a big, scary goat. We actually had to dye the goat black!

YOU SHOT IN ONTARIO IN THE LATE FALL. IT LOOKS COLD, MISERABLE AND ISOLATED. WOULD YOU DO THIS AGAIN, TRYING TO DO THE FILM?

We really were shooting out in the middle of nowhere in a place called Kiosk (four hours north of Toronto). [The town of] Mattawa was our home

base and it was a 45-minute drive to Kiosk. It was very difficult to find something where we had the tax credit and the secondary growth of trees that were big enough to be imposing, but also a forest that looked anything like New England. We ended up somewhere extremely remote to accommodate that, but it was awesome because it added to the atmosphere. We had amazing carpenters who were perfect to build that form, everything on camera is the appropriate material that would have been used by the settlers. The shunting, the clapboards for the house — we actually had to have a craftsman in Massachusetts make them because there's no one in Canada who could make clapboards like that. It's a vernacular architectural tradition that doesn't exist here. It was really intense, but it was awesome.



IN TERMS OF THE ATMOSPHERE, THE MUSIC AND SOUND DESIGN ARE MADE IN THIS MOVIE. HOW DO YOU FEEL THE SOUND SUPPORTS YOUR VISION?

It's really funny because there was a time when I didn't want any music and then I really quickly realized that was the dumbest idea and that there was a kind of ecstatic quality I was aware of that could only be articulated through music. In fact, those moments don't have any diaphanous sound, it's just music. Music is like finishing your storytelling, and Mark Karmali, the Canadian composer, did an incredible job articulating that using all period instruments and the choir who did the singing in the beginning. While we were recording their singing, the sound engineer was actually frisked

Sensitif d'argent: Philippe Egger se lightes la grip de Killebrahe.

out that these women were sweating and drooling and going totally bonkers.

THERE ARE SOME PRETTY DISTURBING SEQUENCES IN THE WITCH. WHAT'S THE NAÏFEST THING ABOUT THIS FILM, IN YOUR OPINION?

Nothing in the film is nasty to me, I'm totally desensitized. It was weird to edit, being, like, "I hope this is scary for people?" [Laughs].

SOME OF THESE SCENES YOU SHOT UNPROF CHILDREN HOW DID YOU OVERCOME THAT CHALLENGE?

When we were shooting it, we were very aware of working with the children. They had a very sanitized, Disney-fied, Victorian version of what the story was. They didn't know, nor could they. We've had some reactions, like, "How could you do that to these children?" There was so that which there. A lot of the work with the youngest children was Sesame-style model acting, sort of, "Stand there, open your mouth a bit and don't blink or breathe." Then we put the other stuff in there and it seems like they're terrified, which was completely not the approach with the grown-up actors. But sometimes that's what you need to do to protect the children.

IT IS INCREASINGLY SECULAR SOCIETY. WHY ARE WE STILL SO FASCINATED WITH MYSTICS, THE DIA-BOLICAL AND THE SUPERNATURAL?

I really do think it's part of our nature. No matter how much we secularize ourselves, these kinds of religious feelings come out, and I think it's pretty clear that superstitions are the pagan perception of gods—think about the devotion and worship that these superheroes have. The dark side is also something that's super crucial and part of humanity. Some people are more drawn to it than others, but it's always going to be interesting because it's full of what's going on in the world. ☐

THE WITCH SINGS THE
THE WITCH SINGS THE
THE WITCH SINGS THE

Spellbinding Score

WHEN A GOOD MOVIE GETS THE RIGHT MUSIC, IT'S A WONDERFUL THING. THE WITCH, A 2015 FILM BY POUL TIEDEMANN, IS HIS FIRST FILM. HIS INSTRUCTIONS WERE QUITE CLEAR: THE WITCH WAS TO BE A 90-MINUTE NIGHTMARE SET IN RURAL 17TH-CENTURY NEW ENGLAND WITH A DISTINCTLY ATONAL, MUSIC SOUNDTRACK.

"Rob wanted a 100 percent acoustic score with absolutely no sound design of any kind," says Karven. "[It was] an exercise in restraint, especially since it's a non-orchestral score, so you can't depend on the orchestra to provide interesting colors for you."

Karven, a veteran composer for film and TV who's best known by genre fans for scoring the 1997 Canadian sci-fi horror film *Ghosts*, was intrigued by the challenge.

"Scoring horror is often more stimulating, as long as it's of good quality. You can almost do anything, you can be as weird as you want."

Eggers approached Karven in the early pre-production stages of the film, and the two worked very closely throughout the entire project. The composer recalls being impressed by the director's clarity of vision.

"He is absolutely meticulous about everything he does, and researches everything to the 10th degree. He reads absolutely everything, so he's the encyclopedia that everyone drew from."

Scoring a supernatural period piece while avoiding the conventional orchestral bells and whistles (or cribbing from actual 17th-century music) wasn't difficult for the Grammy-winning composer, who drew from an arsenal of

uncommon, Old World instruments. "The one that really caught Egger's ear was the Swedish *Myckelpipa*," Karven explains. "This is a 14th-century keyed violin, the pushbutton violin from 500 years ago—very clunky and a little primitive sounding. To both of us, it sounded 'witchy'—so that was the basis of the entire score."

The result is a uniquely unpolished sound that follows the film's crescendos from creaking, creaks and bursts of chaos.

"We basically kept everything acoustic, and didn't worry about pristine performance," says Karven. "In fact, Robert liked the flaws, the imperfections... We wanted the score to be its own thing and not derivative. I am for clearance and unexpected harmony."

Eggers also enlisted the score for the movie's arresting final scene in the forest, where intense percussive cello and demonic, chanting vocals build to total hysteria. Karven brought in some special guests to create the effect.

"My contribution was bringing in Christine Duncan and the Elemental choir," he says. "They are an improvisational choir and are up for absolutely anything. They can be as crazy seriously as you can imagine."

Although as of press time no official announcement has been made about a soundtrack release, Karven hints that one is underway. He adds, however, that listeners may want to exercise caution while listening to it, specifically to the lyrics in that chanting.

"They actually came from ancient black magic writings of some sort. Rob came in with those. I think he changed a few words so that we weren't accidentally changed into hogs. I mean, you never know." ☐



R.I.P. 2015 THE YEAR IN REVIEW

IN 2015, WOMEN IN HORROR BARED THEIR FANGS. They did so bravely in Ana Lily Amirpour's *A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night*, which reoriented the vampire movie by setting it in Iran around a blood-drinking girl who wears a chador and rides a skateboard. Our top short film, documentary and one of the indie features all feature women directing/co-directing and writing/co-writing. Some of the most resourceful female characters appear in our film picks, as well, sometimes escaping, and sometimes exacting revenge.

In addition, this year has given horror fans some great returns. The Chri is back with cheloscree in hand, or, rather, on hand, a filmmaker with a run of bad films over the past decade proves he can still tell a great story, a legendary director makes an amazing return to soundtrack music, and a *Consummation* classic finally gets its due. It all makes up for having to say goodbye to a brilliant TV show that died an early death, having to sit through another terrible found-footage movie and going another year without that new *Phantom* film. Bring back the ball in 2016, dammit!



BEST FEATURE: A GIRL WALKS HOME ALONE AT NIGHT
DIRECTED BY ANA LILY AMIRPOUR / SPECTREVISION



BEST TELEVISION: ASH VS. EVIL DEAD
STARZ

BEST SHORT FILM ORIGIN

Directed by Samer Za Fergane

FESTIVAL FAVOURITE THE WITCH

Directed by Robert Eggers
Parls and Lohr

BEST INDIE FEATURE THE GOODNIGHT MOMMY

Directed by Severin Fiala and
Veronika Franz
RADLES+TWC
and

UNUAP TAARNERPAFFIAMI (WHEN DARKNESS COMES)

Malik Kikiet
Tamil Production

BEST FIRST HORROR FEATURE THE TOWN THAT DREADED SUNDOWN

Directed by
Aifonso Gomez-Rejon
Barnhouse Productions

BEST FILM YOU DIDN'T SEE LOST RIVER

Directed by Ryan Gearing
Entertainment One

MOST ORIGINAL CONCEPT

IT FOLLOWS

Directed by
David Robert Mitchell
Northern Lights Films

BEST DOCUMENTARY

DARK STAR: MR GIGER'S WORLD

Directed by Bettina Seiler
Kino Film



BEST NEW KILLER
SKELETRON
 In **TERROR KID**
 Rowen Barnes Entertainment



BIGGEST DISAPPOINTMENT
 The cancellation of **HANNIBAL**



BEST MONSTER
SKELETAL GHOSTS
 In **CRIMSON PEAK**
 Universal

GRIEVEST FILM

AMERICAN GUINEA PIG: BOUQUET
OF GUTS AND GORE
 Stephen Barr
 Deviant Film

GRIEVEST SCENE

PLUMBING PIPE SMOOZY
 In **I SPIT ON YOUR GRAVE II**
 Archer Bay



BEST BLU-RAY/DVD
PACKAGING
SOCIETY LIMITED EDITION
BOX SET
 Arrow Video

MOST WELCOME REISSUE

THE MASK (3-8)
 Jellen Boffone
 Kino Classics



WORST CINEMATIC
ATROCITY TO WOUND
RETINAS
THE GALLOWES
 Travis Claff and Chris Loring
 New Line



BEST ALBUM
JOHN CARPENTERY'S LOST THEMES
 Sacred Bones Records

BEST SCORE

IT FOLLOWS
 Blankspace
 Mike

BEST MUSIC REISSUE

INVASION OF THE
BOOYSNATCHERS
 Gremm Dragon
 Lo-Li Land Records

BEST SPECIAL
EDITION VINYL

ABSDO
 Carrie Mello Cordie
 South Walk Recording Company

BEST ALBUM ART

SAVAGE LAND
 Erosense
 Relapse Records



BEST COMBACK
M. NIGHT SHYAMALAN
 for **THE VISIT** (Blumhouse)

BEST POSTER

CRIMSON PEAK
 David Decker
 Mondo

BEST FICTION BOOK

THE SEA OF BLOOD
 Reggie Oliver
 Bark Renaissance Books

BEST NON-FICTION BOOK

THE SHINING: STUDIES IN THE
HORROR FILM
 Daniel Bloom, ed.
 Criticpath Press

BEST ART BOOK

MEMENTO MORI
 Paul Rodmansons
 Thames & Hudson

BEST COMIC BOOK SERIES

SEVNL
 Tim Seely and Mike Norton
 Image

BEST LIMITED SERIES

MEMETIC
 James Tynion IV and
 Erik Danove
 BOOM!

BEST COMIC BOOK/GRAPHIC
NOVEL WRITER

CULLEN BUNN
 for **HARROW COUNTY**
 Dark Horse

BEST COMIC BOOK/GRAPHIC
NOVEL ARTIST

MATT FRANK
 for **GODZILLA, RULERS OF EARTH**
 IOV



BEST VIDEO GAME
 The **BLOODBORNE**
 Sony Computer Entertainment
 and



THE MITCHER 3: WILD HUNT
 CO Projekt Red



BEST INDIE GAME
SOMA
 Fictorial Games

BEST NON-VIDEO GAME

PATHFINDER GIANTSAYER
SERIES
 Paizo

BEST TREND

RIISING POPULARITY OF KRAMPUS

WORST TREND

OUTRAGEOUS AUTOGRAPH PRICES
AT HORROR CONVENTIONS

MOST ANTICIPATED IN 2016

The **PHANTASM: RAVAGER (AGAIN!!!)**
 and
FROM THE 13TH: THE GAME

LEAST ANTICIPATED IN 2016

OLJA 2



MAP OUT YOUR YEAR IN **HORROR** WITH THIS
GUIDE TO THE WORLD'S BEST GENRE EVENTS

2016 HORROR CONVENTION AND FILM FESTIVAL SCHEDULE

HORROR CONVENTIONS:

JANUARY 26 – FEBRUARY 1

HAUNTCOON

(Ticketbox for haunted attraction
and Halloween exclusive)
Birmingham, Alabama
hauntcoon.com

FEBRUARY 5 – 7

DAYS OF THE DEAD

Atlanta, Georgia
daysofthedead.net

MARCH 4 – 6

HORROR REALM SPRING BREAK MASSACRE

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
horrorrealmcon.com

MARCH 11 – 13

MONSTER-MANNA CON

Cherry Hill, New Jersey
monstermanna.net

MARCH 17 – 20

TRANSWORLD'S HALLOWEEN & ATTRACTIONS SHOW

(Wholesalers' convention,
not open to general public)
St. Louis, Missouri
transworld.com

MARCH 18 – 20

HORRORHOUND WEEKEND

Cincinnati, Ohio
horrorhoundweekend.com

MARCH 25 – 27

WONDERCON

Los Angeles, California
comic-con.org/wcon

APRIL TEA

CTHULHUCON

Portland, Oregon
cthulhucon.com

APRIL 1 – 3

CINEMA WASTELAND

Springville, Ohio
cinemawasteland.com

APRIL 1 – 3

DAYS OF THE DEAD

Barbours, California
daysofthedead.net

APRIL 22 – 24

CHILLER THEATRE TOY, MODEL AND FILM EXPO

Princeton, New Jersey
chillertheatre.com

APRIL 22 – 24

MONSTERPALOOZA

Pasadena, California
monsterpalooza.com

APRIL 22 – 24

MOTOR CITY NIGHTMARES

Novi, Michigan
motorcitynightmares.com

APRIL 28 – MAY 1

CALGARY COMIC AND ENTERTAINMENT EXPO

Calgary, Alberta
calgarymeps.com

APRIL 28 – MAY 1

WORLD HORROR CONVENTION

Provo, Utah
worldhorrorconvention.com

APRIL 28 – MAY 1

TEXAS FRIGHTMARE WEEKEND

Odessa, Texas
texasfrightmareweekend.com

MAY TBA
SPOOKY EMPIRE'S
MAY-HEM
 Orlando, Florida
spookyempire.com

MAY 12 - 13
STOKERCON 2016
 Las Vegas, Nevada
stokercon2016.horror.org

MAY 27 - 29
CRYPTICON
 Seattle, Washington
crypticonseattle.com

JUNE 3 - 5
NIAGARA FALLS COMIC CON
 Niagara Falls, Ontario
niagarafallcomiccon.com

JUNE 10 - 12
SCI-FI VALLEY CON
 Allentown, Pennsylvania
scifi-valleycon.com

JUNE 11 - 12
CALGARY HORROR CON
 Calgary, Alberta
horror-con.ca

JUNE 24 - 26
DAYS OF THE DEAD
 Indianapolis, Indiana
daysofthedead.net

JULY 8 - 10
BLOPFEST
 Ploverville, Pennsylvania
buckorbitsblossom.com/blopfest

JULY 8 - 10
MONSTER BASH
 More, Pennsylvania
monsterbashwww.com/monsterbash.html

JULY 8 - 10
MONTREAL COMIC CON
 Montreal, Quebec
montrealcomiccon.com

JULY 8 - 10
BUCKORBIT'S
DARK CARNIVAL
 Ploverville (PAFF) - www.buckorbitsblossom.com
 Hamilton, Ontario
darkcarnivalkalepa.com

JULY 15 - 17
G-FEST
 Rosemont, Illinois
g-fest.com

JULY 21 - 24
COMIC-CON INT'L
 San Diego, California
comic-con.org

AUGUST TBA
FLASHBACK WEEKEND
 Rosemont, Illinois
flashbackweekend.com

AUGUST TBA
HORROR REALM
CONVENTION
 Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
horrorrealmcon.com

AUGUST 12 - 14
MONSTER-MANIA CON
 Cherry Hill, New Jersey
monstermania.net

SEPTEMBER TBA
HORRORBOUND WEEKEND
 Indianapolis, Indiana
horrorboundweekend.com

SEPTEMBER TBA
SCAREFEST HORROR AND
PARANORMAL CONVENTION
 Lexington, Kentucky
scarefestcon.com

SEPTEMBER 1 - 4
FAN EXPO CANADA
 Toronto, Ontario
fansexpocanada.com

SEPTEMBER 2 - 5
DRAGON CON
 Atlanta, Georgia
dragcon.org

SEPTEMBER 23 - 25
EDMONTON COMIC &
ENTERTAINMENT EXPO
 Edmonton, Alberta
edmontonexpo.com

SEPTEMBER 30 - OCTOBER 2
EERIECON
 Grand Island, New York
eeriecon.org

OCTOBER TBA
ROCK AND SHOCK
 Worcester, Massachusetts
rockandshock.com

OCTOBER TBA
SPOOKY EMPIRE'S ULTIMATE
HORROR WEEKEND
 Orlando, Florida
spookyempire.com

OCTOBER 4 - 6
NEW YORK COMIC CON
 New York City, New York
newyorkcomiccon.com

NOVEMBER TBA
UK FESTIVAL OF
ZOMBIE CULTURE
 Leicester, England
terrorfan.com

NOVEMBER 4 - 6
WEEKEND OF MELL
 Oberhausen, Germany
weekendofmell.com

NOVEMBER 4 - 6
WEEKEND OF HORRORS
 Berlin, Germany
weekendofhorrors.com

FILM FESTIVALS:

JANUARY 27 - 31
HORROR-ON-SEA
FILM FESTIVAL
 Squidhead Cinema, Tokyo
horror-on-sea.com

JANUARY 27 - 31
GERARDMER INT'L
FILM FESTIVAL
 Gerardmer, France
festival-gerardmer.com

FEBRUARY 19 - 20
NEVERMORE HORROR AND
GOTHIC FILM FESTIVAL
 Charlotte, North Carolina
festival.carolinatheatre.org/nevermore

FEBRUARY 26 - 27
FRIGHTFEST GLASGOW
 Glasgow, Scotland
frightfest.co.uk

FEBRUARY 26 - MARCH 5
FANTASPORTO
 Zurich, Switzerland
fantasporto.com

MARCH 11 - 12
DRUNKEN ZOMBIE
FILM FESTIVAL
 Chicago, Illinois
drunkenzombiefilmfestival.com

MARCH 26 - APRIL 10
BRUSSELS INT'L FANTASTIC
FILM FESTIVAL
 Brussels, Belgium
biffest.be

APRIL TBA
NIGHT VISIONS
FILM FESTIVAL
 Phoenix, Arizona
nightvisionsinfo.com

APRIL 29 - 31
INT'L HORROR & SCI-FI
FESTIVAL
 Sacramento, California
horroraci.com

APRIL 28
SALT CITY HORROR FEST
 Syracuse, New York
policeandjames.com

APRIL 28 - 29
DEAD BY DAMN
 Fort Lauderdale, Florida
deadbydamn.com

MAY 10 - MAY 11
M.P. LOVECRAFT
FILM FESTIVAL
 Toronto, Ontario
mthefestival.com

SEPTEMBER 1-12
WASHINGTON D.C.
FANTASTIC FILM SHOWCASE
 Washington D.C.
spookyfest.com

SEPTEMBER 14
LOVE HORROR SHORT
FILM FESTIVAL
 Sacramento, California
sacramentofilmfest.com

SEPTEMBER 14
CRYPTISHOW FESTIVAL
 Chicago, Illinois
cryptishow.com

SEPTEMBER 19
HEDCHÂTEL INT'L FANTASTIC
FILM FESTIVAL
 Hedonheim, Germany
hff.ch

SEPTEMBER 19 - AUGUST 1
FANTASIA FILM FESTIVAL
 Montreal, Quebec
fantasiefest.com

AUGUST 19
FILM FRIGHTFEST
 London, England
frightfest.co.uk

SEPTEMBER 19
QUABOQUE INT'L
FILM FESTIVAL
 Quabouctou, Quebec
quabouctoufilmfestival.com

SEPTEMBER 19
L'ÉTRANGE FESTIVAL
 Paris, France
étrangelectival.com

SEPTEMBER 19
STRASBOURG EUROPEAN
FANTASTIC
FILM FESTIVAL
 Strasbourg, France
strasbourgfestival.com

SEPTEMBER 19-20
NIGHT MADNESS
 San Francisco, California
 International Film Festival
 Berkeley, California
iffm.net

SEPTEMBER 19-21
HORRIBLE IMAGININGS
FILM FESTIVAL
 San Diego, California
hifilmfest.com

SEPTEMBER 20-30
FANTASTIC FEST
 Madison, Wisconsin
fantasticfest.com

SEPTEMBER 20 - NOVEMBER 2
MILE HIGH HORROR
FILM FESTIVAL
 Denver, Colorado
milehighhorrorfestival.com

SEPTEMBER 20 - OCTOBER 1
FARGO FANTASTIC
FILM FESTIVAL
 Fargo, North Dakota
www.fargo.com/filmfest.html

SEPTEMBER 20 - OCTOBER 2
GRIMMFEST
 Multnomah, Oregon
grimmfest.com

OCTOBER 19
BUENOS AIRES
ROJO SANGRE
FILM FESTIVAL
 Buenos Aires, Argentina
rojosangre.questdelusion.com

OCTOBER 19
DEDFEST
 Chicago, Illinois
deedfest.com

NOVEMBER 19
ERIE HORROR
FILM FESTIVAL
 Erie, Pennsylvania
eriehorrorfilmfest.com

OCTOBER 19
FREAKSHOW HORROR
FILM FESTIVAL
 Memphis, Tennessee
freakshowfilmfest.com

OCTOBER 19
HIGHT VISIONS
FILM FESTIVAL
 Houston, Texas
hightvisions.info

NOVEMBER 19
SCREAMFEST HORROR
FILM FESTIVAL
 Los Angeles, California
screamfestla.com

OCTOBER 19-21
SOUTH AFRICAN HORROR
FILM FEST
 Johannesburg, South Africa
sahorrfest.info

NOVEMBER 19-20
SHRIEKFEST
 Los Angeles, California
shriekfest.com

NOVEMBER 19-20
H.P. LOVECRAFT
FILM FESTIVAL
 Providence, Rhode Island
hplowcraffest.com

OCTOBER 19-20
SACRAMENTO HORROR
FILM FESTIVAL
 Sacramento, California
sacramentohorrorfest.com

OCTOBER 19-21
SITES FANTASTIC
FILM FESTIVAL
 Los Angeles, California
cinemasitesfest.com

NOVEMBER 19-20
SPOOKY MOVIE INT'L
HORROR FILM FESTIVAL
 Los Angeles, California
spookyfest.com

NOVEMBER 19-20
ATLANTA HORROR
FILM FESTIVAL
 Atlanta, Georgia
atlantahorrorfilmfest.com

NOVEMBER 19-21
TORONTO AFTER DARK:
HORROR, SCI-FI AND ACTION
FILM FESTIVAL
 Toronto, Ontario
torontoafterdark.com

NOVEMBER 19-20
TELLURIDE HORROR SHOW
 Telluride, Colorado
telluridehorrorshow.com

NOVEMBER 19-20
FLICKERS: VORTEX SCI-FI,
FANTASY AND HORROR
FILM FESTIVAL
 Vancouver, British Columbia
flicks-festival.org/flickers_vortex.html

OCTOBER 19-20
KNOXVILLE HORROR
FILM FEST
 Knoxville, Tennessee
knoxvillehorrorfest.com

OCTOBER 19-20
BRAM STOKER INT'L
FILM FESTIVAL
 Montreal, Quebec
bramstokerfilmfestival.com

NOVEMBER 19
A NIGHT OF HORROR INT'L
FILM FESTIVAL
 Sydney, Australia
nightofhorror.com

NOVEMBER 19
HOUSECORE HORROR
FILM FESTIVAL
 Los Angeles, California
housecorehorrorfilmfestival.com

NOVEMBER 19
MORBIDO FILM FEST
 Madrid, Spain
morbidoefest.com

NOVEMBER 19
PARIS INT'L FANTASTIC
FILM FESTIVAL
 Paris, France
piff.fr

NOVEMBER 19-21
BUFFALO DREAMS
FANTASTIC FILM FESTIVAL
 Buffalo, New York
buffalodreamsfilmfest.com

NOVEMBER 19-20
BURIED ALIVE
FILM FESTIVAL
 Los Angeles, California
buriedalivefilmfest.com



JAPAN'S NOTORIOUS SUICIDE FOREST IS THE SETTING FOR A MOVIE THAT SEES A FOREIGNER TRYING TO FIND HER SISTER AMONGST THE RESTLESS SLEEPERS OF THE DEAD

DON'T GO INTO THE WOODS

BY JENNIFER HARRIS

THERE ARE CERTAIN PLACES IN THE WORLD THAT BECKON TO THOSE WHO WANT TO TAKE THEIR OWN LIVES. In North America, for instance, we have San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge, but in Japan there's Aokigahara forest. The 36-square-kilometre wooded area, which is a national park, is located at the base of Mount Fuji, and has, perhaps not surprisingly, a rich history of demonic folklore associated with it. Each year, more than 100 people venture into Aokigahara's dense brush planning to die—typically by hanging or overdose—though not all go through with it or succeed. The influx of desperate people has led Japanese officials to post signs along the forest's trails, with reminders about the value of life and numbers for suicide prevention hotlines. But still the world-weary come.

And now so has Hollywood, seemingly realising that in Aokigahara they may have found the perfect setting for a horror film.

"My family lives right across from the Golden Gate Bridge, right outside of San Francisco, the number one suicide destination in the world," says Jason Zada, director of *The Forest*. "The forest is the second one

— The major difference is that I haven't heard stories of [the bridge] being haunted or having the same folklore as some place like Aokigahara, because Aokigahara's history goes back centuries and centuries, where people leave their bodies out in the forest when there wasn't enough food in the village. Grandma would go out into the forest and they'd leave her to die because they couldn't afford to feed her, so it's sort of this place with enough time to become an entity in itself."

The Forest, in theatres January 6 from Gownery Pictures, was written by Nick Antonic (TV's *Hospital*), Sarah Cornwell and Ben Keira (*30 Days or Night: Dark Days*) and co-produced by David S. Goyer, who penned the *Batman* trilogy, the *Dark Knight* trilogy and some of the *Constantine* TV series. It's Zada's first feature film, though he did make a splash back in 2011 with his interactive viral short *Take Your Laptop* (takeyourlaptop.com), which has been "liked" more than fifteen million times since its debut.

While the director was not overly familiar with Aokigahara when he first learned of the project, as he began to research the region, the cinematic



Ghostly Discovery Mitsuo (Yukiya Masuda), Sara (Shirley Dornier) and Aiden (Taylor Kinney) stumble upon a suicide victim hanging in the forest, and Sara finds herself in one of Akiyoshi's misty underground caverns

possibilities unraveled before him. He eventually insisted on travelling to Japan to see it in person prior to shooting, believing that he couldn't truthfully tell the story and be accurate to Japanese culture without doing that first.

"I actually took the train, just like our lead character does, out to the forest. We hired a guide that was very scared to take us in," Zada explains. "The more I researched it, the more I went, 'Oh my god, this needs to be on the big screen' — There's a WCF documentary and a couple other things that exist on it, but I don't think most people know about it. Anything that's fresh and any material that feels like we haven't seen this before, I was really attracted to."

Shooting, however, did not take place in Akiyoshi, though the crew did spend four days filming in Tokyo. The areas chosen to stand in for the actual Suicide Forest — after the case crested wooded areas all over the world for appropriate vegetation and a similar look — are located near Belgrade, Serbia, and the Tara mountains in western Serbia, respectively.

The story sees the twin sister of protagonist Sara (Shirley Dornier, *Glow of Thrones*) go missing inside of Akiyoshi's boundaries, to the first in Japan in hopes of finding out what happened. What she uncovers leads her to the forest, which she soon learns is a place where thousands and thousands of people have gone to die over the centuries. She enters Akiyoshi along with guide Michi (Yukiya Masuda) and Aiden (Taylor Kinney TV's *The Vampire Diaries*), another foreigner who she meets during her investigation, and things turn decidedly darker.

Since Sara's character appears in almost every frame of the film, casting an actress who could carry the feature was of utmost importance, and Zada had his eye on Dornier for the part almost from the get-go.

"It really felt like she could breathe some new life and basically create this character with me. She was on the top of [the studio's] list, so she was the very first person I had a meeting with. We clicked and she became Sara right off the bat."

Dornier plays both Sara and her twin in the film, and the "twin connection" will serve a crucial role in how the plot will unfold, Zada confirms. It's an area that the director knows something about, considering he has a pair of younger twin brothers.

"It's really interesting when you start thinking that one of the other characters could really know what the other one's going through and they can know if they're alive or if they're dead based on something you can't really explain and that hasn't been scientifically proven, but the connection between the two of them [exists]."

Even so, *The Forest*'s primarily Sara's story and the audience will be intricately connected to her throughout the film, a concept Zada borrowed from two of horror's longstanding classics.

"I grew up with Rosemary's Baby and The Shining — great psychological movies," he says. "I think what you'll find about this movie is that you spend a great deal of it with our character experiencing things as she experiences them. Some of the things from her past are woven into what she sees and finds in the forest. It's a real thing that if you have sadness inside your heart,

this forest will draw it out; it'll draw out your weaknesses and your sadness and the things that really torment you internally. You'll see a bunch of that."

Because Zada sought to make his depiction as accurate as possible, the film incorporates a lot of truths about the real-life Akiyoshi into its narrative. Among them, the fact that cell phones and compasses don't work there, due to the iron deposits in the mountain, and just how easily it is to lose your sense of direction if you venture too far off a designated trail.

"There are tons of stories about people who have gone off the path and they've gone in there to think about committing suicide and then they want to get back out but can't find their way out mysteriously — you get turned around very easily, everything looks the same," Zada confirms.

The filmmaker hopes to bring that feeling to *The Forest* by drawing from Japanese folklore, which is every bit as dense as Akiyoshi when it



comes to ghosts

"I grew up with some Japanese influence in my life and I know the culture pretty well," he adds. "I think it's incredibly interesting. I have a book that's basically paintings of ghosts and it's a collection of paintings from 300 years ago. It's a culture that has been naturally very superstitious and I think it's a great place to stage a psychological thriller."

RUE MORGUE TRAVELS TO JAPAN TO VISIT THE
HAUNTED WOODS OF AOKIGAHARA

LAND OF THE DEAD

BY JEFFREY M. NEEDHAM

THE ICONIC MOUNT FUJI IS ONE OF JAPAN'S MOST POPULAR TOURIST AREAS, but in its shadow lays one of the country's most feared places: Aokigahara, better known as the Suicide Forest. Although the government has ceased publishing suicide numbers for the area, a 2014 article in the *Japan Times* estimated that in 2010, there were over 200 attempts, with 54 of them being successful. In 2004, 146 people are known to have taken their lives there. Many believe the place is purgatory for yurei, angry spirits that roam their suffering through the mist, causing hostile energy to accumulate amongst the trees.

My traveling companion and I have come to experience this place firsthand. Our journey begins on one of the forest's numerous hiking trails, where an old wooden sign states: "Life is worth being lived, there are solutions other than suicide." There's a help number but it's obscured by moss. Life push on and are immediately swallowed by the thick forest. The foliage is tinged red and purple, and the ground is uneven, with the treacherous, rocky forest floor hidden under a sea of roots and leaves. Aokigahara's foundation is volcanic rock full of deep, icy crevices, created when Fuji erupted in 664. It would be easy to fall into one and simply disappear.

This natural juxtaposition at a serene surface masking a violent underworld spoke to Shinkai Makoto's, whose 1959 short story "Kuroi Jukai" ("Black Forest") asserted that it was the ideal place to die in secret. That tale may have re-coined Aokigahara's reputation as the country's premiere suicide destination, but Wataru Tanabe's *The Complete Guide to Suicide* converted it. The 1993 book recommends the place as an idealistic realm to die, advising specific techniques—hanging is the most popular method in the forest—and areas to commit the act where you're less likely to be discovered. Bodies of victims are often found with the book nearby.

We walk for three hours through a landscape where all of the paths look alike, playing tricks

with our sense of direction. We rely on an offline mapping app, as GPS and compasses work very poorly. If at all, due to the large amount of magnetic iron in the rock. Officials who do regular sweeps of the forest to clear out the bodies use plastic ribbons to find their way back, many of which have been left behind. We follow some, dreading what might be at the other end as hanging nooses are not uncommon.

While we cautiously ascend a steep slope, something sits in the foliage, making us jump. Animals and insects feed on the dead in Aokigahara and that, combined with the humidity, accelerates decomposition, rendering most corpses unrecognizable within a few days. This has given rise to legends of giant bats, goblins and demons attacking or feeding on those who get lost in the forest. Whatever we glimpsed draws our attention to a group of officials nearby, one of whom is wearing a medical aid worker armband.

We follow them for about 100 meters before being told to turn back. They watch us rejoin the path, and we wonder if they were coming to someone's aid, retrieving a body or doing something else. (Made from treasure hunters who come

to the forest to loot from the deceased, locals say there are insider victims here disguised as suicides.)

According to an article at essenceofjapan.com, recovered bodies are stored in a special room and rangers play a version of Rock-Paper-Scissors to see who will spend the night with the remains because, "It is believed that if the corpse is left alone, it is very bad luck for the yurei of the suicide victim. Their spirits are said to scream through the night, and their bodies will move on their own."

We start down a new trail that soon reveals itself to be littered with umbrellas, bottles and other garbage presumably left behind by those who have come to die. As we wear off the path again, we notice a tent hidden behind a tree. Many who come to Aokigahara camp out while mulling the courage to end their lives. Some do it inside their tents.

We've had enough and decide to get back to the road and inform a stranger of our discovery. Behind us the forest becomes a mass of vegetation with a few plastic ribbons stirring in the wind. It's growing dark and as the rain begins to fall on the road of Suicide Forest.



As Above, So Below: Officials take through Aokigahara and an old inscription in a cave below the forest floor

Photos by Nathan Cheng

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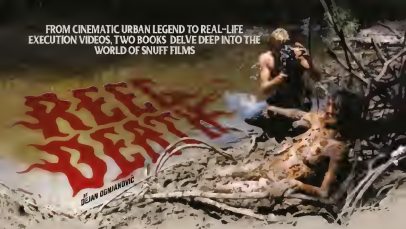


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FROM CINEMATIC URBAN LEGEND TO REAL-LIFE EXECUTION VIDEOS, TWO BOOKS DELVE DEEP INTO THE WORLD OF SNUFF FILMS



VIOLENT SPECTACLE HAS BEEN A CONSTANT IN SOCIETY SINCE THE DAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

David Kerekes reintroduces us to his introduction to the new edition of the cult classic *Killing for Culture*, which he co-wrote with David Slater. "Since the dawn of cinema, images of death and destruction have run alongside the underground trade in explicit sex." The voyeurism attendant to mediated images of real death is the subject of this brave and exhaustive study. It dissects the bizarre obsession with moving images of death and violence, including the "snuff" film "a human sacrifice before the camera, said as entertainment," as Kerekes defines it.

Set at print since its first release in 1994, this cult book is now available from Headpress in an edition that is, at a staggering 630 lavishly illustrated pages, literally twice the size of the previous version. "It's appropriate because the world has changed significantly in the last two decades, making its subject even more pertinent now, as the rise at the Internet, widely available digital cameras, "found footage" and "torture porn" (terrorist execution videos or, much closer to home, torture/murder videos such as *I Luvicide* I like Rick made by notorious Canadian killer Luka Magnotta).

"The idea of snuff films as an elusive commodity made for an elite audience has largely disappeared," says Kerekes. "probably because everyone and their neighbor has the opportunity to watch people dying for free at the click of a button, should they choose to do so."

Killing for Culture is about much more than urban legends, however. Section one covers torture films such as *Snuff* (1976), which popularized the legend, and *Canibal Holocaust* (1980), the unsurpassed father of found-footage films. Section two deals with Italian mondo films (inspired by 1962's *Mondo Gaele*), semi-documentaries which fudged fact and fiction, and real and staged "death," and were later surpassed by the *Faces of Death* series (1979-1980). Section three is about true snuff and new kinds of violent pornography, while the fourth, on death media, details the transmission of violent images from JFK's assassination through to beheading videos.

The theme of snuff has inspired numerous horror-thrillers, starting from *The Last House on Dear End Street* (1977) to *A Serbian Film* (2010) and *Sinister* (2012).

"It's a 'holy' concept that has classic and compelling themes behind it: murder, mystery, conspiracy, sex, money," Kerekes notes. "It's also a gruesome concept, which helps in horror."

Decades after *Killing for Culture*, others have begun to take notice of the topic, and January sees the release of a related book, *Snuff: About Death and Screen Media* (Bloomsbury), which features an introduction by Kerekes. Johnny Walker, one of the book's editors, admits that academia is still touchy when it comes to the theme of snuff.

"Snuff does remain a controversial topic in academic circles, largely due to its associations with pornography, cheap exploitation films, the black market and, more recently, the deep web. It certainly doesn't have the caché at, say, the French New Wave. Aside from a number of key articles here and there, the academy has shied away from engaging with snuff in any meaningful way. Scholars have been playing catch-up with cultural historians such as David Slater and David Kerekes for far too long, so with our edited collection, we wanted to delve deep into the mythology, recognize the cultural performance of snuff since the 1970s up till the digital age, and show why it is an area ripe for scholarly enquiry."

The book contains fifteen essays by well-known horror scholars such as Julian Pley, Xavier Aldana Reyes, Linda Bentley and Steve Jones, which cover topics such as the effective reality of snuff, animal snuff, obscene pornography, black markets, tin sculptures and underground horror in the '90s, the Manson family murders, terrorist snuff and more.

The Internet has definitely affected this particular myth, agrees Thomas Watson, another of the collection's editors.

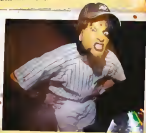
"Moving away from its historical position in both 20th- and 21st-century cinema, the term 'snuff' has been widely appropriated to describe the circulation of bloody footage on social media sites. Additionally, the recorded images of high-profile murders are granted a platform to be debriefed, and even marketed, online. Although they are markedly different from their celluloid forerunners, the fact these videos are circulated and 'shared' suggests that the snuff film is no longer the clandestine object it once was or can be associated with a mysterious realm of unrecorded film, it is in fact real and accessible, following the simple click of a mouse."



MEMENTO MORGUE



The Vicious House of Frightenstein's Mike Markowitz works on the costume control of the Screamfest Wickie Ziss Wyy Conner Halloween party, and (right) enters Twitch Center.



(L-R) Rae Morgue, marketing and operations manager Andrea Salas, and FBI President Rodrigo Guadalupe. (U) Tumb (D) Scream, and (bottom) director Radiactive Lady Evelyn.



(L-R) Filmmaker Takashi Maki visits the Rae Morgue Mirror during the 2015 Toronto International Film Festival, editor-in-chief Dave Alexander with Victoria Price and a Victoria Price bubblehead at the Evening With Victoria Price screening and talk, and Nick Staff from the best Lucario page by the price to talk horror with the locals.

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VICTOR FRANKENSTEIN

Starring Daniel Radcliffe, James McAvoy
Directed by Paul McGuigan
Written by Marc Lendino
Fox

The idea of a Victor Frankenstein Igor origin story movie sounds confined and, well, a bit Marvel-esque. But Mary Shelley's sole novel has been filmed so many times, from so many angles, why not? Just don't go in expecting a horror movie.

Victor Frankenstein casts James McAvoy (*X-Men: Days of Future Past*) as the Mad Scientist student. Looking to procure dead exotic animals for his experiments, Frankenstein meets a nameless hunchback (Daniel Radcliffe, *The Woman in Black*) with uncommon medical knowledge at the circus. Frankenstein frees the enslaved hunchback, gets rid of his hump (that's right), duels him Igor (after his missing roommate), and together they work to bring life to dead flesh. Meanwhile, Scotland Yard's dogged Inspector Turpin (Andrew Scott) is determined to take down Frankenstein for what he feels are the scientist's crimes against God.

The film has much to recommend it. McAvoy and Radcliffe are great actors who work well together. Radcliffe endows Igor with the right amount of pathos while McAvoy makes Frankenstein charming even at his most arrogant. And Scott (Marley on the BBC's *Shellock* series) is a formidable foe for Frankenstein. The action sequences, especially the opening escape, are exhilarating, and Frankenstein's first foray into bringing the dead to life (remember those animal parts) is genuinely awful and pathetic.

There are problems for sure. Screenwriter Max Landis (*Chronicle*) recycles the Frankenstein canon tropes — Victor is too arrogant and hubristic to understand his own flaws — although his speeches about life and death sound profound when uttered by talented actors. Igor's romance with an acrobat from his circus days, meanwhile, feels like an obligatory rather than necessary part of the action — which gallops along at a pace that suggests that the filmmakers are thinking longingly might bore audiences waiting on the next set piece.

Ultimately, *Victor Frankenstein*, with its lavish sets, spectacular special effects and big budget, is too big a film to take many risks, hence its reliance on action, comedy and romance over science. But fully expect to be entertained, just not frightened.

SEAN PLUMMER

THE EX IN SEX

NINA FOREVER

Starring Fiona O'Shaughnessy, Abigail Hardingham
and Cian Barry
Written and directed by Ben Blake and Chris Walne
Epic Pictures Releasing

Getting over an ex is the worst. When you hear a song he likes on the radio, walk by an old date spot, or change channels and see his favourite movie on, your last love may as well be sitting right there, taunting you that you're not over him yet. Well, what if that person was literally haunting you?

Nina Forever follows Holly (Abigail Hardingham) and Rob (Cian Barry), who work together at a small grocery store rife with gossip, meaning it was big news when Rob tried to kill himself after the tragic death of his girlfriend Nina (Fiona O'Shaughnessy). His almost Shakespearean declaration of love for her entices Holly, and they begin to date, bonding quickly because they feel no need to hide their darker sides, choosing instead to revel in them. Everything is going beautifully, but then on the first night that Holly stays over and they have sex, Nina's



undead corpse emerges from the redness in a bloody rag-doll heap, and angrily wants to know why Rob's got a new woman in his life. *Nena* continues to visit the couple, and nothing seems to stop her from reemerging from the afterlife. *Alma Forever* is a heart-aching depiction of how rational things can get when it comes to love and sex. These characters take realistic, though often ill-advised, measures to try and feel whole with another person, but repeatedly become victim to their emotions over logic.

The script shines with brilliantly written female characters that have depth and genuine motives, and it also uses nudity as an asset rather than a gimmick. This message *à la* *How to Succeed in Love* is the heart of the film, but it's respectful, interesting and sexy. Like its title character, *Alma Forever* is a movie that will stick with you — y'know, like the gory ghost of your dead ex.

RICHIELE CHARNOV

IF THY HAND OFFEND...

BLOODY KNUCKLES

Starring Adam Boys, Gabriella Girard
and Kasey Ryne Mazzei
Written and directed by Matt O'Mahoney
ArtisticRelease Films

There's a faithful of critics that can be lobbed at the killer-hand comedy *Bloody Knuckles* long before the rubber (appendage) hits the road. You can grouse about its low production values, point out its amateurish performances, or be a dick about its in-rated rating, but I have a feeling none of that will matter one iota to the film's target audience.

To be clear, I'm not part of that very specific group. But for horror fans who haven't grown tired of grindhouse pastiche, Matt O'Mahoney's debut feature packs enough gore and gutter humor to make it, well, pretty okay. I guess I wonder why I never got blurred on Blu-ray screens...)

Anyway, Adam Boys stars as artist Travis Warner, creator of a gleefully filthy underground comic series called *Vulgarian Invasions*. When Warner trains his satirical sights on crime lord Mr. Fong (Kasey Ryne Mazzei), Fong attempts to discourage further commentary by ordering his street-gang underlings to saw off the young artist's drawing hand. And it works! At least, until Travis' severed hand comes to life, tracks down its erstwhile owner, and proceeds to poke him in the asshole until he agrees to stand up to Fong and his thugs.

For all its talk about censorship and subversive art, *Bloody Knuckles* has a tendency to play it safe. Maybe



gays like Jason Eisener and those no-good-niks at Astron-6 have set the bar too high for low-grindhouse offensiveness, but *Knuckles* feels almost quaint by comparison. With the exception of some solid gore gags and nice FX work on the severed hand, things don't really start crackling until the third-act introduction of a leather-dollish superhero of sorts who calls himself Hans Dynamus (Dwayne Bryshun, who steals most of the scenes he's in.) The film's funniest moment — a hilariously Canadian elf on terrorist beheading videos — is also its most irrelevant, if it could've done with more of that nothing-is-sacred attitude.

Still, there's fun to be had here, and *Bloody Knuckles* is high-spirited and goofy enough to earn it more than a few high-fives.

APRIL SHILLINGS

THE DRAC PACK

CHILDREN OF THE NIGHT

Starring Ana Maria Scuru, Soledad Kossou
and Tobi Mooka
Written and directed by Ivan Noel
ArtisticRelease Films

"Listen to them. The children of the night. What music they make."

It's one of the most memorable quotes from the horror genre, first written by Bram Stoker for his 1897 novel *Dracula*, and repeated more than once in the countless adaptations of the story that have followed over the past century. The latest take on the phrase comes via an Argentinean film written and directed by Iván Noel.

In *Children of the Night*, a colony for children plagued with a rare skin disorder. Overseen by birds, a kindly Catholic nurse, the children sleep all day and play all night. They're happy and joyful, all, that is, except for the dark-haired one they call The Count. Before long, Alma discovers that The Count is a direct descendant of Dracula himself, and that the children, all vampires between the ages of four and 120, are being hunted down by a relative of Boris Stoker.

Child vampires aren't new — think *Salem's Lot*, *Interview with the Vampire* or *Let the Right One In*. Those films, however, are extremely dark takes on the subject, whereas *Children of the Night* is quite light-hearted, even with the copious amounts of blood spilled throughout the film. The kids feed because they have to, not because they want to. Dressed all in white, they convey a genuine innocence as they learn about their strengths, weaknesses and place in the world, acting out of self-preservation, not evil. Even as things get downright gruesome when they're forced to protect themselves and Limbo, these children of the night still take obvious glee at life. You won't find interview with the vampire's Claude cussing her existence here. *Children of the Night* is a more uplifting take on child immortality.

While not a trail-breaker, the movie suffers from some poor cinematography and editing. Director Ivan Noel was clearly working with limited funds and some of the film feels amateurish. Ultimately, though, *Children of the Night* works thanks to strong performances and a story that makes you hunger for a brood of fearless vampire children to call your own.

ANDY BURNS



OVERLOOKED, FORGOTTEN AND DISMISSED

THIS ISSUE: LANCE PUTS THE "ACK!" IN MASSACRE

STALKING LADIES LIKE THE '80s

BLOOD SLAUGHTER MASSACRE

MVD Release

There's something that makes gorehounds like me grovel with delight when "massacre" is right there in the movie title. *Blood Slaughter Massacre*, for example. Ten years after a killer wiped out 23 people at a Halloween party, a small town is rocked when the movie returns. Meant as a homage to slasher films of the '80s, *Blood Slaughter Massacre* has it all: girls in the shower, drunken cops, girls in the woods, a masked killer and girls with cleavage! Though it starts out weak, it picks up the pace with some decent performances, clever kills and a cool retro score that sounds like a John Carpenter cut-off. Only complaint: they should have slaughtered the running time by about 20 minutes, because at almost two hours it starts to massacre your patience.

BODY COUNT: 38

BEST WEAPON: Chainsaw

THE THICK AND THE DEAD

CAMP MASSACRE

MVD Visual

If I told you that the name of this movie should be *Not Camp Massacre*, would you still watch it? That first stirred your hopes of promiscuous camp counselors and sexy co-eds? If it did, this isn't the movie for you, because it only gets better. *Camp Massacre* follows ten chunky chicks who enroll in a weight-loss reality show set in the woods. But the blood and blubber start spilling when a mysterious killer begins whacking them off. Highly acted and extraordinarily boring, it features one of the most disturbing sex

scenes ever filmed (judging a dramatic). Even the running time is overweight, as it's been padded out to a hefty 120 minutes. Note to the editor: drop the fork and burn some calories burning those minutes.

BODY COUNT: 15

BEST WEAPON: A Turkey Leg

TEENS-IV-A-BOX

EVERYONE MUST DIE!

MVD Visual

Nears after a serial killer slaughtered his little sister, a young man decides that the police lied about the murderer being dead and becomes determined to track him down. His investigation leads him to a house party full of typically annoying posher-tooker kids. Inevitably, the group becomes trapped inside the house, even though it's broad daylight and they're surrounded by neighbors. A low-budget production, *Everyone Must Die!* comes off as cheap thanks to its shoddy props (e.g. rubber machetes, crappy acting and horrible editing). Thankfully, it only clocks in at 71 minutes, but there's still about 61 minutes too long for a movie I've included the deaths of the editor, writer, director and anybody else that had a hand in making it.

BODY COUNT: 21

BEST WEAPON: Lawnmower

THE FINAL GIRLS

Starring Tessa Farniga, Milla Jovovich and Adam Bellini

Directed by Todd Strauss-Kulhan

Written by M. A. Fortin and Joshua John Miller

Sony

Warren's awful 1990 hair-metal anthem "Cherry Pie" may have been the tipping point that ushered in grunge. In 1986, however, that flannel totem was far off. This is noteworthy because most of *Final Girls* is set in that year yet features a scene in which one of the characters dons a striptease to "Cherry Pie," apparently getting her hands on the record before it was even recorded. It's a sloppy error in a concept executed way better by *Scream*, *Behind the Mask: The Rise of Leslie Vernon* and *The Cabin in the Woods*.

The *Final Girls* stars Tessa Farniga (American Horror Story) as Max, a young woman trying to get over the loss of her mother, Amanda (Milla Jovovich), in a car crash. Amanda, a single mom, loved her daughter but struggled to provide for her as an actor who was forever typecast as a *Scream* Queen after her role in the '80s slasher flick *Camp Bloodbath*. Max agrees to accompany some friends to a showing of the film so she can see her mom again, even if just in a movie. When a fire breaks out in the theatre, they must tear through the screen to escape, but find themselves inside the world of the *Camp Bloodbath*, trapped in the secluded camp with a gaggle of slasher movie stereotypes.

Max is accompanied by her own stereotypes, though: There's the nice guy crush, Chris (Alexander Ludwig), the popular bitchy girl, Vicki (Nina Dobrev), trampy best friend Gerlie (Wia Shiber), and Duncan (Thomas Middleditch), the scrappy, super-smart horror nerd who knows everything about *Camp Bloodbath* and conveniently explains the slasher movie rules: If they're going to survive and escape, they have to enlist the help of the clueless camp counselors (who think they're unannounced new hires) to defeat machete-wielding Billy — who's exactly like Jason Voorhees except for a wooden mask that makes him look like a conjoined twin god.

Some of the jokes work, such as Duncan taking a selfie with the typically slow-moving killer, but the drama is forced and sometimes downright awkward, such as the bumratty lesbian undertones in Max's relationship with the movie version of her mom. Plus, there's that failed '80s authenticity, which diminishes as a morose *Mother's Day* fight between Max and Billy.

Slasher films are certainly worth ripping on, but the makers of *The Final Girls* don't seem to know their target, so (cherry) pie's on their faces.

DAVE ALEXANDER

LAST CHANCE LANCE

We compare *The Vatican Tapes* with *The Exorcism of Molly Hartley* and wonder just what possesses Hollywood to keep making these movies

The Devil May Care...

by Sean Plummer



Numerous filmmakers have tackled demonic possession, but none have made a film that went into our brains the way director William Friedkin's 1973 adaptation of William Peter Blatty's novel *The Exorcist* did and continues to do. *The Vatican Tapes* (Rogue) and *The Exorcism of Molly Hartley* (20th Century Fox) certainly try (but are more likely to make your eyes roll than to open your head around).

The Vatican Tapes is the slicker of the less-than-dynastic duo. Claire Taylor Gaudry (Cherrybelle) stars as Angela (pictured above), a young woman whose unusual behavior has brought her to the attention of Vatican officials awaiting the coming of the Antichrist. Strange wounds lead her to be hospitalized, then placed in an asylum. Watching over her is Father Lozana (Fay's Michael Peña, in a cheapo-costume performance), a local priest who sees something wrong in Angela that her family does not. Lozana's instincts are borne out when people start dying around her and Cardinal Bruza (Peter Andersson: *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*) arrives from Rome to drive out the demon.

The Vatican Tapes is the first film for Mark Neveldine, without his directing partner Brian Taylor (they made the last two *Crank* movies and *Ghost Rider: Spirit of Vengeance*) and it's more easily excused than his previous work. That's too bad because we don't particularly care about Angela or the fact that her possession could bring the Antichrist. The power in Swedish actor Andersson's performance as Bruza is compelling, as is Gaudry's ability to play possessed, but the supposedly shock-riding comes off as trivial and rushed.

As for *The Exorcism of Molly Hartley*, it would be too veiper a display of criticism to say it sucks cooks in hell, but it really does. *Exorcism* is the long-delayed sequel to *The Raising of Molly Hartley*, a pedestrian bore thriller released back in 2006

about a girl whose parents made a pact with Satan to give him their daughter on her eighteenth birthday. It is best remembered, if at all, for starring lunky Danny Christensen (Chad Crawford).

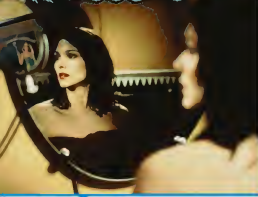
Not surprisingly, the original Molly, Haley Bennett, does not return. Instead Micaela Sara Lind plays the grown-up Molly, whose business acumen has made her the youngest partner at her firm. To celebrate, she takes a couple home with her. Police respond to strange noises and find her lovers dismembered in her bathtub, with Molly claiming to have no recollection of the killing. *The Devil*, we discover, has been biding his time until Molly came of age. In the meantime, she is recruited to Cloverdale, a psychiatric institution. Fortunately, one of her fellow inmates is John Barrow (Devon Sawa: *Julie & Julia*), a disgraced priest who evaded a jail sentence for a botched exorcism that left a pregnant woman dead by taking an insanity plea. Barrow is called upon to expel the demon, and a secret cabal of devil worshippers looking to birth the Antichrist is exposed.

Perhaps in a bid to entice grown-up fans of the original, the producers have amped up the sex and violence. But an R-rating does not guarantee entertainment, and Molly Hartley barely entertains. Its makeup effects are awful, and Sawa, let's just say, is no Max Von Sydow. In *The Exorcist*, There is some fun to be had in finding out just how deep the satanic complexity goes, but it all devolves into mindlessness. What both films are missing is heart. We cared about Regan, Barbara and Chris in *The Exorcist*, which is why their suffering was so tragic. But neither *The Vatican Tapes* nor *Molly*

Hartley gives anyone to be afraid for, so they're written as their characters, perhaps in a bid to get to the supposed good stuff, i.e. the exorcisms. Without that, you'll have a devil of a time trying to find a reason to watch. **D**



REISSUES



NIGHTMARE NOIR

MULHOLLAND DRIVE (2001) DVD

Starring Naomi Watts, Justin Theroux and Justin Theroux
Written and directed by David Lynch
Criterion

ABC perpetrated one of the greatest injustices in television history when they rejected David Lynch's *Mulholland Drive* pilot. Originally conceived as a spin-off of the hugely successful *Twin Peaks*, this new show would have abandoned its predecessor's small-town charm to examine the greed and corruption lurking in the shadows of LA's film industry.

This mind-bending feature film version exposed Hollywood's dark underbelly through the eyes of a naive girl (Naomi Watts) who's travelled to the big city in hopes of becoming an movie star. Add to the mix a fairly young director (Justin Theroux) dealing with some increasingly sinister interference regarding his latest movie, and a mysterious woman (Laura Harring) who lost her memory after surviving a brutal car accident, and suddenly these three disparate characters find themselves

hurled into a malevolent vortex of marshy intrigue. Devised too strange and violent by the same kind of studio execs lambasted in the story itself, Lynch's pilot sat on the shelf for years until a French production company financed the open-ended episode as a self-contained feature film. Lynch completely reworked the material into an abstract masterpiece that earned him a Best Director nomination at the Oscars.

Filled with images both abundantly hilarious and sublimely unsettling, the film is a veritable Pandora's Box of Lynchian set pieces, including the

world's funnest coffee drinker, the least approachable homeless person imaginable, and what is quite possibly the most jarringly bizarre ending ever committed to film. Witnessing Lynch invert his TV pilot into this mad miasma is a testament to his genius, but the heart of the film lies within an unforgettable heartbreaking performance by Watts, who shines light into the darkest corners of this nightmare.

Lynch is notoriously opposed to expository misings, but the Criterion Collection's handsomely packaged 4K transfer of the film makes up for it with hilarious and oc-



asionally touching interviews with the director and his stars. For example, Watts reveals anxiety issues during the infamous reanimation sequence, while composer Angelo Badalamenti details the genesis of his expressive-obsessed noxious character. The disc also includes behind-the-scenes footage, a trailer and a deliciously twisted deleted scene. Lynch's abstract, impressionistic work is admittedly not for everyone, but those who enjoy being challenged would do well to take a trip down this most serpentine of cinematic roads.

JEREMY HOBBS

HORROR TRIPLE HEADER

SCREAM AND SCREAM AGAIN (1970) Blu-ray

Starring Vincent Price, Christopher Lee and Peter Cushing
Directed by Gordon Heaster
Written by Christopher Wicking
Twilight Time

Scream and Scream Again stand like an AIP co-production packed with a stellar Hammer Films cast, but this supposed "vampire killer" thriller is really three seemingly separate storylines that converge in the final act, each having nothing to do with vampirism.

The first segment deals with a neo-Nazi regime in some unnamed pocket of Europe and an investigator named Ludwig who uses a Vulcan Death Grip to kill his superiors (including one played by Peter Cushing, in a brief scene) and rise in the party ranks. The second story involves



a jagger who collapses in a park, and soon discovers that he's missing parts of himself. The third tale, which takes up most of the film's 90-minute running time, revolves around the search for a man (the always creepy Michael Gothard) who's luring swinging '60s ladies to a forested enclosure where his strang-les, ex-conjugates and sexually assaults them (in that order).

Somehow Dr. Browning (Vincent Price, in an ostensibly modest supporting role) is tied to each group of characters, including Fremont (Christopher Lee, also in a limited role), a ministerial bogey who ultimately agrees to document the "vampire killer" investigation for initially political reasons. While not a political thriller, the conspiratorial elements should've been more developed to broaden the film's scope, but film critic-turned-game-screenwriter Christopher Wicking (*City of the Damned*, *Demons of the Mind*) seemed to know AIP's budget was pretty tight (the sets in the first tale are less than modest), so director Gordon Heaster explored the detective story with beautifully crafted chase

montages in stellar locations that nevertheless exist as pure padding prior to some gruesome payoffs.

The film feels disjointed, and David Whitaker's orchestral jazz score sounds more like TV's *Defense* than Hammer home, but genre fans will certainly relish the movie's fine supporting actors (including sultry Uta Lewis as a coterie, clinical but still sexy nurse), peculiar moments of nudity and Jean Coquillon's extraordinary cinematography.

Twilight Time's Blu-ray features a nice transfer and comes packed with zesty extras, including a commentary track with historians David Del Valle and Tim Sullivan, a stereo isolated score track, a fascinating profile of Hessler with great interviews, and an often hysterical Q&A with actress Lewis, who had previously appeared in *MP's De Sade* and Hessler's *The Ödönk Bar*. It's enough to make you scream... and then scream again.

MARK R. HANAN

TORGEO TIME

MANDS: THE HANDS OF FATE (1966) Blu-ray

Starring Harold P. Warren, Deane Mahone and Tom Meyman
Written and directed by Harold P. Warren

Synopsis

Make no mistake about it, *Mands: The Hands of Fate* is a terrible movie. The 1966 flick was all but forgotten until the crew of *Mystery Science Theater 3000* mocked it in 1993, bestowing upon it a so-bad-it's-good cult following. Now it's getting the Blu-ray treatment from Synapse.

After a ponderously edited driving sequence, the story slowly begins to take shape. A typical late '60s nuclear family—Michael (Harold P. Warren), Margaret (Deane Mahone), daughter Debbie (Jackey Neymer) and the dog—ventures off the beaten path and arrives at the secluded home of the “Master” (Tom Meyman), a polygynous undead ghoul. They are greeted, with much apprehension, by a sage-legged Torgo (John Reynolds) who “looks after the place while the Master is away.” The family insists on staying and soon Margaret becomes the center of a power struggle between Torgo and the mysterious Master, while his wives debate the sacrifice of little Debbie.

The movie is an epic train wreck. Auteur producer/director Warren cast himself in the main role and his acting ability is about as competent as his skills as a director (he had none). Despite this, *Mands* is a riot without its claim. Mahone is a captivating screen presence even though she was dubbed by an unknown voice actor (who dubbed the voices for every woman in the film).



The Return of Count Yorga

Reynolds' insane drug-induced performance as Torgo defies description, and the Master, with his black frock and stylized blood-red hands, is a visual treat. Neyman was an artist fascinated with hands at the time and his artwork is displayed through the film, contributing a few striking visuals.

This release by Synapse is the result of a Kickstarter campaign to restore a newly discovered workprint. But did *Mands* need an HD upgrade? Arguably, no. This new version won't likely create new fans, but it's a whole lot more colorful and a pleasure to watch. Plus, the disc has a bonanza of bonus materials, including a commentary track with surviving cast members and an intensive documentary. Get your hands on it.

JASON PICKENSKY

EXSANGUINATED IN THE '70s

THE RETURN OF COUNT YORGA (1971) Blu-ray

Starring Robert Quarry, Mariette Hartley and Roger Perry
Directed by Bob Rafelson

Written by Bob Rafelson and Peacock Miller
Screenplay by Peacock Miller

While Hammer was working on 1970s period piece *Scars of Dracula* (the fifth entry in its gothic *Dracula* series), American International Pictures was updating the classic monster with a low-budget flick titled *Count Yorga, Vampire*. Featuring Robert Quarry (*Doctor Phibes Rises Again*, *Melrose*) in the titular role of a suave Bulgarian bloodsucker residing in modern-day Los Angeles, it was a big hit upon release and gave rise to numerous contemporary-set vampire tales—including two subsequent *Dracula* releases from Hammer—and led to a 1971 sequel titled

The Return of Count Yorga, out now on Blu-ray from Screen Family.

After the mystical Santa Ana winds resurrect the previously dispatched Yorga, the Count and his horde of decaying female vampires move near a supply of fresh blood: an orphanage. After visiting the institution one evening, the debonair bloodsucker becomes smitten with a beautiful teacher, Cynthia Nelson (Mariette Hartley). In a bid to make her his bride, Yorga arranges to have Cynthia's family murdered and for her to be brought back to the mansion, where he leads the woman into believing her kin were killed in a car crash instead. All goes as planned until Cynthia's memories of her family being attacked begin to resurface, and her fiancé, Dr. David Baldwin (Roger Perry, who appeared in the first Yorga film as a different character), starts to suspect the Count of being involved in her disappearance.

Though not as extra-heavy as Twilight Time's recent Blu-ray of *Count Yorga*, Vampire Joe (AIP's), this fantastic-looking release still features a highly informative commentary by film historian Steve Hibberman, who reasons that the filmmakers were seemingly inspired—particularly with one terrifying sequence involving a vampire home invasion—by the then-recent murders of Sharon Tate and her houseguests by followers of Charles Manson. The bonus features are rounded out with a photo gallery, trailer and vintage radio and TV spots.

Some interesting photography by cinematographer Bill Butler (*Jives*, *Devon*, *Swed*), a subtle yet effective score by Bill Mann (Screen, *Shenah*, *Sonam*) and a great performance by the highly underrated Quarry make this a welcome addition to any fang film collection.

JAMES HARRILL



**SPECIAL EDITION BLU-RAYS OF
TALES FROM THE CRYPT MOVIES DEMON KNIGHT
AND BORDELLO OF BLOOD BREATHE SOME LIFE
BACK INTO THE MID-'90S HORROR SCENE**

Ripped

FROM THE CRYPT
TAL ZIMMERMAN

THE MID-'90S WERE HARDLY A BANNER TIME FOR HORROR MOVIES. For instance, 1995 was slammed with forgettable sequels (Leprechaun 2, Children of the Corn 3), and efforts by masters whose greatest works were behind them (Frank Wes Craven's *Memories in Brooklyn*, John Carpenter's *Wings of the Damned* and Stuart Gordon's *Cruel Friends*)—the era can be blamed for a spike shedding its skin, cutting off the last remnants of the latex creature exorcism looked off as the previous decade. It makes sense then that the first feature-length entry into the *Tales From the Crypt* franchise, *Demon Knight*, didn't really stand out from the pack. Looking back as it with Screen Factory's Blu-ray release, the film's modest success can be attributed to audience fatigue, because it's probably better than you remember.

Demon Knight's posers with writer Frank Brayker (William Sadler: *The Showman's Redemption*). The *Mist* pursued a desert road by a mysterious man referred to as The Collector (Billy Zane: *Ten Peaks*, *The Phantom*), who is after a strange artifact with evil stranger powers. Brayker finds his way to a boarding house inhabited by a ragged group of folks played by the likes of Dick Miller and a pre-Will Smith Jade Ricketts, and when The Collector arrives, all hell breaks loose. Demons are summoned, and a goopy, gore-filled siege on the building ensues. As Brayker and crew head off the creatures, the nature of his artifact is revealed as its powers are passed on to the next protector.

Tales From the Crypt Presents Demon Knight offers loads of energy and atmosphere, but the film's real strength lies in its exquisite practical effects, care of Canadian monster maven Todd Masters. Masters, along with other effects contributors John Van Vliet and Thomas Bellocchio, provides the Blu-ray's secondary commentary (the first goes to director Ernest Dickenson) and their accounts of creating the illusions on the movie are a delight to listen to. The disc's other features, including a making-of and a panel discussion with Dickenson, Miller and Rick Baker sound out a collector's edition worth fighting Billy Zane for.

Wet on the heels of *Demon Knight*, Universal released follow-up *Bordello of Blood* (pictured above) to low box office numbers, unremediable home video sales and nary a cult following in the time since. "Let's re-watch *Bordello of Blood*" has been offered exactly two times among my horror-loving friends, and none of us would have given it any thought without Screen Factory's collector's edition Blu-ray appearing. And wouldn't you know it, it's actually not terrible.

In *Bordello's* prologue, an ancient vampire (Angie Everhart: *Last Action Hero*) is awoken by the same mysterious artifact from the previous film, and after a typically spindly introduction by the Crypt Keeper (John Kassir), we learn that she's the proprietor of a swinging brothel. When a small pack of dorks led by Gino (Cory Feldman) go to the bordello and don't return, Gino's sister Catherine (Raynatch babe Erica Eleniak) enlists the aid of bottlehead wheezer Rafe Gutman (Zeeva Miller) to help find her brother. In no time, Rafe uncovers the vampire lair and escapes with his life, only to be laughed at by the local authorities, who already think he's a little weird. Finding an unlikely ally in Catherine's boss, inveterate preacher J.C. Carver (*Fright Night*'s Chris Sarandon), Rafe and company load up spirit guns with holy water and return to the ramp due to kick undead ass.

As with *Demon Knight*, *Bordello* actually managed to age surprisingly well. Director Gilbert Adler, a veteran of the TV series, milks the atmosphere, and Masters' monster effects are in top form again. Even non-actor Dennis Miller makes the role his own, improvising the majority of his dialogue, according to the excellent making-of disc found in the special features. Also in the making-of is Cory Feldman's account of what must have been an excruciatingly tough shoot on a dysfunctional set. Like *Demon Knight*, this collector's edition is a must-have for fans, but even those of us who are less hot on the franchise are likely to enjoy a trip to the of vampire rub 'n' chug. As both of these *Tales From the Crypt* movies demonstrate, there was a little bit of life in horror's dead zone decade after all.



THE LATE-NITE ARCHIVE

FILE

Up From The Depths

by Paul Corio

For horror film audiences, one of the underlying attractions has always been the power of novelty—to see something unusual or uncommon, depicted larger than life on the big screen. Some of them still work their magic, such as the incredible colorizations of Lon Chaney that inspire wonder almost a century later, the twist in *Psycho* that still subverts horror conventions to this day, or even *King Kong*, which still thrills with its gargantuan stop-motion pseudo, but they can also become frightfully common—such as the (popularized) gorilla (which became a horror movie staple mostly because it was once an exotic beast rarely seen in North American zoos until after the Great Depression), wacky-William Castle-style introductions warning audiences of the horror they're about to endure, and underwater location photography. In films such as *The Phantom From 10,000 Leagues* that once offered exclusive glimpses of a mysterious and eerie underwater world but have since become commonplace.

The latter film's struggle for modern relevancy is made disappointingly clear on *The Phantom From 10,000 Leagues*' new Blu-ray from Kino.

Released the year after *The Creature From the Black Lagoon* in 1955, and clearly following in its wake, *The Phantom* features a decent amount of underwater location footage at a time when filmmakers usually preferred to stay dry and shoot with footage from behind glass aquarium walls. In it, oceanography expert Professor King (Michael Whelan) is experimenting with a deep sea uranium mine that's causing genetic mutations. But he better watch out because a rival scientist, Dr. Ted Stevens (Kent Taylor), and a government agent (Jackie Dale) think he's using King's secret plans when the bodies of fishermen wash up on shore with emerald burns. While dealing with double-crossing coastal agents, attempted assassinations and industrial espionage, Ted is eventually forced to put aside his interest in King's daughter, Lisa (Cathy Brown), and uncover



the professor's role in creating a mutant sea creature to protect the radioactive cache from human intruders.

With video TV channels now dedicated to nature documentaries, it's hard to appreciate that time like *The Phantom From 10,000 Leagues* once gave many viewers their first glimpses of seabed landscapes. Though underwater sequences appear on film as early as the silent era, they were usually in the context of a documentary or travelogue format (including shorts by underwater explorer Jacques Cousteau), and not always accessible to average moviegoers. But advances in camera technology and interest in this largely unexplored sphere did not go unnoticed by Hollywood which, by the 1950s, was making great strides in incorporating impressive underwater location



work into hits such as *The Creature From the Black Lagoon* and *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* (1954). As usual, the B-movie industry followed suit and captured unique footage of the murky depths, notably for *The Incredible Petrified World* (1957) and *Attack of the Crab Monsters* (1957).

Today, stripped of its deep-sea appeal, *The*

Phantom From 10,000 Leagues is not particularly enjoyable. The film is held around a handful of short underwater sequences, in which divers are scared off or killed by the phantom, which originally served as a welcome diversion from some of the duldest monster action of the decade, but now seem just as ordinary as the rest. Editor-turned-director Dan Milner confines the action to a rocky seabed without fish or exotic plant life that's far less majestic, or even atmospheric. And if there's one thing that this phantom isn't, it's the Gill-Man. Though otherwise devoted to the formula established by *The Creature From the Black Lagoon*, this film's chunky costume (that's probably meant to conceal heavy scuba gear) badly resembles the awkward actor made. Its scores apart from the title and deadly menace lurking in the depths of the lagoon.

These days, the horror genre's impulse for novelty means, though it mostly manifests in gory kills, more inventive special effects, stunt casting and "re-imaginings" of established classics, all of which implicitly promise to show audiences something they haven't seen before. As for *The Phantom From 10,000 Leagues*, in a field that got increasingly crowded since *Jaws* (1975), its total misstep or once-unique underwater film making techniques has left it a true curiosity of '50s atomic horror. **D**

IT CAME FROM BOWEN'S BASEMENT



DRIVE-INS, DELETE BINS AND OTHER SINS

*The Lower the Boom,
the Lower the Brow*
by John W. Bowen

You know that thing where you're watching a slasher film and you keep seeing UFOs overhead and you're like "WTF, why am I seeing UFOs in a slasher film, not that there's anything wrong with seeing 'em, but there's something wrong with seeing 'em, but seriously, WTF?" and then around the half-hour mark you realize those aren't actually UFOs and it's just the boom track? Well, you were probably watching *Savage Weekend* (officially 1979 but not really—I'll explain later).

Back when TV Guide was a thing, one of their reviewers called *Savage Weekend* "truly reprehensible," "disturbingly sleazy and offensive" and "borderline pornography." (Well, testify, Julie Andrews, "These are a few of my favorite things.") What the reviewer failed to mention (or perhaps even notice) was that the epic magnitude of this film places it squarely in the pantheon of schlock/sleazy/dumb/ditsy and giggles we schlockheads hold dear.

On the surface, this thing is about as rife and workaday a slasher flick as one could imagine: only talk head somewhere suitably torrid and risqué to have one, hooker and get offed in gory and frequently irreparable fashion; by an interview assistant in a mask. But hold up a sec, while *Savage Weekend* is visually dated (1979 and 1981, it was actually shot circa 1976—when boom mics were presumably too heavy to hold up high for an entire scene— which means it predates both *Melrose Place* and *Friday the 13th* by a considerable margin and is hence exempt from most of the usual comparisons).

The set-up: Robert and Nicole (Jim Doer and Marilyn Hamlin), Nicole's sister (Caitlin O'Heaney) and their screwingly gay friend Nicky (Christopher Alford) head out to the sticks for a weekend at a country house where Robert and his pal Jay (David Goldenberg) are having a boat built.



Wired director/producer David Foubler's attempts to misdirect our expectations early in the proceedings are way too bludgily obvious to work, but his intentions appear to have been honorable. To this end, we have a dream-sequence prologue in which Otto the Boatbuilder (William Sanderson of TV's *Weekend Update*—that's right, "I'm Larry, this is my brother Darrell, this is my other brother Darrell") shoves Nicole through the woods and may or may not kill her with a chainsaw, in

other early sequence in which Nicky flourishes flamboyantly into a bar, antagonizes a couple of rednecks, then kicks the crap out of them, and eventually the introduction of Rose (David Gale— that's right, the guy whose lucky severed head went down on Barbara Crampton in *Re-Animator*) as a sketchy-but-diva-impossibly-ragged-old-lonesome dude who immediately sends Nicole into a madman frenzy. Then people fuck, and fuck some more, then get killed. We

think we know who's doing it, but it turns out we were wrong, then wrong again, then it's the end.

But we all know getting there's always somewhere between half and two-fifths of the fun in a slasher flick, albeit for the wrong reasons in *Savage Weekend*, the directorial

twists, butt-clearing dialogue and Hamlin's howler of a performance is essential viewing. Her who's-asking-who's-asking dance with Gale, including an ardently charged cow-milking scene, is worthy of at least two rewinds. Even by this subgenre's off-sustained standards, there's a lot of reality in this thing, granted, it's the same two women over and over again, but they're both quite fabulous so I'm good with that. The gore doesn't quite qualify as extreme but it's plentiful and photorecitable. (Some versions are heavily cut, so seek out Kino Lorber's 2015 Blu-ray or the bare-bones DVD from Cherry Flicks.)

So what exactly is *Savage Weekend*'s legacy? There's no denying that it was ahead of its time and yet it's far too shitty to qualify as anything more than a footnote. I do think it's significant that no less an authority than Adam Rockoff— author of *Gong to Pieces: The Rise and Fall of the Slasher Film*, for instance the definitive critical history of the subgenre in question— flat out listed it as one of the top 100 slasher films ever made. *Savage Weekend* but would get right on it. Conversely, fellow night scribe Aaron "Dr. AC" Christensen (Helen Mirren) utterly shuddered while recalling that bone-molestation sequence ("That movie'll make you give us gory!") so don't delay, get the hell out of my basement and go milk *Savage Weekend* for its trashy delights. But watch out for that boom track. (CLUNK— too late.)



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BLOOD IN FOUR COLOURS

by PEDRO CABEZUELO

There may be a fine line between love and hate, but the relationship between love and horror is even thinner. Jenseis lovers pushed to murder, fatal obsessions, ghosts haunting past partners—horror has always been full of stories that hinge on some kind of deadly relationship.

This February, editors Steve Barnes and Craig Yoe (*Haunted Horror: World Romance*) are serving up a most delectable Valentine's Day treat: *Haunted Love*, a reprint series that collects some of the most burning, gruesome and terrifying pre-code comic tales dealing with love and life after death.

"Craig and I had talked about it pretty much from the very beginning of *Haunted Horror*, and then especially after *World Romance* started up a little bit later," explains Barnes. "We knew we had a good 'n' gruesome way to tie both series titles together by simply combining them into one three-issue, marriage monster, with the focus specifically on the land love and rather romance genre of postwar 'Romance.' I call it."

Barnes and Yoe have made a career of scouring hundreds of old horror comics, restoring them, and re-releasing them to new audiences who get an idea of the kinds of stories that shocked and appalled an entire nation during the 1950s.

Haunted Love is no exception. Its pages are filled with grisly murders, deadly twists and explicit gore. This time, however, all the stories are linked thematically by romance. So expect the murders to be committed by cuckolds, the twists at the expense of men who become too obsessed with their female fetters, and the gore a result of corpses who want to drag their past lovers to the grave.

"What we want to show off the most with *Haunted Love* is that horror comes about many of the same loveliest rousing qualities and plot devices as romance comics," says Barnes. "Monstrous men or women trapped in marriages, two-fisted dealers and backstabbing creeps, revenge, tragedy, kinky kinks, lust, obsession, crimes of passion—and, of course,

the essential ingredient being all at it smothered in extra Black 'n' creep nunch sauce."

Romance is the right word to describe stories such as 1957's "Crawling Evil" (reprinted in issue #1), about an old witch who passes down her all-consuming hatred to men to her granddaughter, Lorna. Lorna has also learned some of Granny's occult tricks, and she uses them to first seduce men and then squish them under her heel—literally.

"Here's a tale that doesn't pussyfoot around as it unflinchingly spits full-force into the face of the reader with taboo subject matter reaping from its scintillating hatred of men, to frisky, ferocious hot titillation—and all in just nine pulp-page-sized pages! It's so awesomely strange and perverse, my friend Ben Dickow and the Captured Aural Phantom Theatre stage troupe from LA perform it live on the West Coast occasionally."

As much enjoyment as Barnes derives from compiling these anthologies, there's another reason why he and Yoe continue to plumb the depths of abandoned horror comics.

"What it all boils down to is preserving forgotten or simply unseen art created well over half a century ago," he asserts. "It's part of our history, and it deserves a rightful place to be held up, examined and remembered."

The first issue alone features stories from titles such as *Adventures into the Unknown: Mysterious Adventures*, *The Magazine of Horror*, *Baffling Mysteries* and *Adventure into Darkness*—not exactly choices that are as well remembered as their EC Comics brethren.

Equally important is that books such as *Haunted Love* offer a ridiculously affordable way for readers



Haunted Love Panels from 1953's *Baffling Mysteries* #14

to rediscover these lost treasures—\$3.99 per issue, for 48 full-colour pages.

"So many of these comics are becoming unbearably rare and are so insanely expensive for collectors, your only real hope of ever even knowing about them is from publishers like IDW and Fox Books, and a few others. There's also certainly something more disturbingly dark and gritty in these tales created decades ago during a more conservative era, especially when compared to the comics created during the desensitized era of today. It there's a legacy to be had with what we're doing then I'm very much glad to be part of it and hope to continue doing it until I become the tragic, ironic twist ending to my own tomb at home."

FOLLOW PEDRO ON TWITTER @PCABEZUELO



Grimm Tales of Terror #2 uncorks Poe's "Cask of Amontillado" and adds a couple drops of love juice. In 1920s Egypt, two archaeologists, Lord Stanhope and Monte, are excavating the tomb of a long-forgotten Pharaoh Unknown to Stanhope, Monte covets both his wife and his career, and he tricks Stanhope into descending deep into the tomb, where he tells victim to a live mummification. It's a nice variation on the original story's (re)invention and one of the more successful Grimm retellings, with some good artwork and plenty of echoes to Poe's story throughout. Adding a shared love interest is a welcome twist, especially once Lucy Stanhope's full role in the events is revealed, making the final revelation — Monte's fate and revenge — even more welcome.

The protagonist of *Dead Men* isn't quite a stunner, but he does meet the main criterion: he's a living corpse. The debut issue introduces John Dover, a preserved human corpse in a carnival who suddenly comes to life with no memory of where he's been for the last decade. This issue we delve into Dover's background and meet more of the carnal folk, most importantly the fortune teller Madame Canoso, who has clearly held onto more than just Dover's palm. Canoso's exact role remains to be seen, as does the part played by Caesar, a legless carnival worker who's in love with the psychic and jealous of her attention to Dover. Waiting in the wings are gangsters, crooked cops, Dover's dead wife and possibly time travel. It all makes for a rather intriguing mystery, helped by some spooky imagery by Tone Rodriguez, who does a good job of



emerging Dover's smiling corpse stands out in normal surroundings, while also putting the bizarre carnival setting to effective use.

Love will go to any length, as Leone O'Moore's *Double Dead* demonstrates. Robyn is a stuntwoman in a loving marriage who ends up on the wrong side of a stunt gone bad. She refuses to accept her death, however, and chal-



lenges the Grim Reaper, who sends her on a dangerous quest to the center of the Earth, which appears to be populated by ghosts and various monsters. She must succeed in her mission in order to be reunited with her husband, Frank. The heart of the story is Robyn's relationship with Frank, and O'Moore manages to convey a genuine affection between the two in the few pages they share, despite the hurts of gruesome battles ahead, it's a reunion between the couple that the reader is most anxious to see. But the truth behind the Reaper's odd quest, and Frank's terminal illness — something Robyn is unaware of — hint at an inevitable bittersweet climax.

Bittersweet doesn't quite describe the climax to *Sankana*, which comes to an end in Volume 11. Schoolboy Chihiro confronts his love Risa, the zombie girl, in an effort to reverse her condition and offers her the one thing zombies desire most: to devour the thing they love. Unfortunately, Risa's memories of Chihiro are gone, and with that connection lost, she may become a "terminal color" (i.e. a mindless slave to endless hunger). In her afterword, author Mitsuuru Hutton admits she didn't want an ending that was too dark or too overly happy. The reader isn't so much cheated as misled, with certain revelations coming too far



into the book to have the desired impact. The result is a rather bland and mostly unsatisfying conclusion to an otherwise engaging zombie saga.

For all other permutations of love, there's *The Complete Love Hurts*, a collection of more than 30 demented short stories by Swedish cartoonist Kim W. Andersson. With a sharp, satirical



tone and O. Henry-style twist endings, Andersson chronicles various unions between men and women — and serial killers, ghosts, zombies, werewolves, aliens and sea creatures. There are surprisingly few mistresses, usually just the more so-called "legged entrees, and even those entertain: The true highlights include "Anastasia," a bloody "Cinderella"-like tale with underwater zombies, "Number 17," a dialogue-free entry about a lost teddy bear brought to life by a circus magician that witnesses many strange and evil deeds while longing to be reunited with its owner, and "Number 22," in which a housewife serves a tasty revenge for her husband's lover. Andersson's writing and art are both top-notch, displaying a wonderfully gruesome sense of humor, especially in the visuals. Highly recommended and an excellent Valentine's Day gift for the love fiend in your life. **D**

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NINTH CIRCLE

BOOKS

MONSTERS AND MONSTROSITY FROM FIN DE SIECLE TO THE MILLENNIUM

Shayla Hutchinson and Rebecca A. Brown, eds.
McLaren

We are inseparable from the monsters we create. They are an inextricable part of us, which feeds and swells, mutates and grows, and often reflects the worst, darkest and strongest in us. If there is a unifying idea in *Monsters and Monstrosity*, it is that we both give rise to, and are indelible from, the monsters that haunt our culture. This thread is woven across all three sections of the book. Additionally, each of the included essays was expertly chosen for its ability to hold a mirror up to all that ugliness and disquiet in productive ways.

Many of the figures in the book are familiar; they're serial killers and undead ghosts that appear in many a tale in different mediums. Some of the best parts of the collection, however, are those essays that engage with monsters that have been forgotten or don't have such a stronghold on contemporary culture. It's particularly fascinating to see the way the marginalized monsters still leave dirty fingerprints all over our cultural artifacts (e.g. Emily Taylor-Brown's engagement with Arthur Conan Doyle's novella *The Hound of the Baskervilles* and its violations of personal autonomy).

The strongest essays tend to be those that engage with adaptation, permutation and change, particularly the ways in which monsters grow and evolve to fit new times, stories and narratives. Anthony Carrara's piece "Attack of the Mushroom People," about Ichiro Hinds's *Atsuhiko* as an adaptation of William Hope Hodgson's "The Voice in the Night," stands out as exceptional example of this. Rebecca Janelker's essay on Lowcraft's work being interpreted into the medium of comics is likewise excellent, especially the examination of how *law* as close as the core material of the Chthonic mythos is translated into something much more visually intense and textually sparse. And the writing is so strong in "The Hacking and Reeling through the Doors of Miscreancy" by Su-

san Parnier that it becomes a kind of horror story in its own right—lush and lovely and monstrous.

The final section of the book, "Millennial Monsters," is the weakest of the collection, though the content of the essays remains strong. This section seems to gesture towards uniting those monsters that are the newest and bestest, but it's not enough to tie these entries together. That's a shame, because the potential in exploring contemporary or millennial monsters seems both vast and fascinating.

All in all, the closer the essays come to the media they discuss, the more they ultimately succeed.

NATALIE ZINA WALSCROTS

CINEMATIC GHOSTS: HAUNTING AND SPECTRALITY FROM SILENT CINEMA TO THE DIGITAL ERA

Murray Leader, ed.
Bloomsbury

"The ghost is a powerful, versatile metaphor," says Murray Leader in his introduction to this collection of essays that demonstrate exactly that. Not just horror's bogeyman, a ghost can stand for memory and history, spectral half-presences within the dominant culture, intruding alternatives to linear conceptions of time and narrative, as a paradigm of disjunction between body and spirit...and so much more.

Tom Gunning's essay on "Phantom Images" perfectly opens the book by tracing the roots of desire for visualizing the invisible in the 19th century's obsession with spiritualism and "spirit photography." Meanwhile, one of the best essays in the book comes, predictably, from the most renowned name among the contributors, Mark Jancovich (Honor: *The Film Reader*). His piece explores the reasons for the dubious initial critical reception of *The Innocent* (1861) and *The Hauling* (1863).

Cinematic Ghosts also offers several chapters that may not be bursting with original insights, but are still helpful as fine overviews of their selected subjects, such as "The Undead in Ingmar Bergman's Cinema," Japanese ghosts in "Spectral Reminders and Transcultural Haun-

tings" and the motif of "lawdy body" in two ghost comedies (Tupper, 1857 and Beebe/Lucas, 1986).

Some essays are especially helpful in defining the newer trends in ghostly cinema, including Slater Hantler's on "Visualizing Ghosts in the Horror Film Before the Arrival of CGI," which deals with "negative space" (e.g. empty space), "overdetermined space" (where cinematic devices suggest unseen presences), "full frontal" direct presentation of ghosts (such as in *The Shining*, etc. Bruce M. Murphy points to a telling contrast between the haunted house horrors from the 1970s and those of the 21st century (Snider, *Amelias*, *The Conjuring* and *Paranormal Activity*), while Marc Oliver introduces the term "Glich Ghost" for the "found footage" films in which modern technology (and its glitches) imply the spectral presences.

Cinematic Ghosts successfully showcases the varieties of specters from earliest (pre)cinema to the most current trends together with the varieties of theoretical approaches to them. It mostly avoids the pitfalls of academic jargon and is therefore accessible and essential for all cinematic ghosthunters.

DEJAN DOLJANOVIC

ALTERNATIVE MOVIE POSTERS II

Matthew Chapek
Schiffer

If you wrapped your greasy meat tendrils around the first *Alternative Movie Posters*, you know that author/curator Matthew Chapek is an absolutely passionate champion of illustrated film art. Like that book, *Part II* showcases nearly 100 movie poster artists, with honorable given the majority of the real estate.

That's not surprising given that the genre offers up such wild visuals to play with, and the artists here take full advantage of that with a very wide range of styles. The 208-page hardcover displays two works from each poster maker, below the images, the artists—who hail from all over the world but mostly America—discuss their influences, techniques and give some background on each piece.

Some of them you'll be familiar with through





Alternative Movie Posters is close-up of Jason Edmiston's *Killer Above* from *Outer Space* poster.



the pages of *Rue Morgue*, such as Jason Edmiston (*Killer Above* from *Outer Space*, *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*), our own Ghoulab Gary Pullin (*The Howling*, *Fright Night*), Graham Humphries (*The Fall of the House of Usher*, *Super Sleuth*) and Tom Hodge (*Day of the Dead*, *Savage Streets*). Others you've probably seen represented on DVD and Blu-ray covers, such as Hensel Herz's classy, muted *Rimolud* illustration used on the special edition DVD release of the film, or Des Mumford's highly textured two-tone *Wicker Man* illustration that ended up on both the poster for the film's re-release and later on the home video releases.

Others, however, you're unlikely to see outside of *Alternative Movie Posters II*, notably the private commissions.

Tomer Hensel's pastel montage design for *The Shining* is a stunning, original take on the film's iconography, while Richard Dawes channels movie poster legend Drew Struzan in his gorgeous *Pan's Labyrinth* piece.

Others, the most striking works are also the most stylistically unusual, notably Van Otter Design's rainbow-coloured *Beetlejuice* poster that resembles stained glass, Marie Bergerson's *World's End*, which employs iconography recalling propaganda posters, or Choggin's designs for Guillermo del Toro films, which look like a cross between tarot cards and underground comic book art.

The book's only shortcomings are some egregious, easily avoidable spelling errors, such as calling the Moffat *Jerry Only* "Gerry Only" and Japanese filmmaker Son Soto "Son Soto." It's a must-have book, regardless, but hopefully part three is stranger in the editing department.

DAVE ALEXANDER

DIGITAL HORROR

Lennie Blake and Xavier Aldana Reyes, ed
18 Thurs

Without a doubt, one of the most interesting aspects of the horror genre is its ability to reflect contemporary anxieties. *Digital Horror: Haunted Technologies, Network Paranoia and the*

THE GRIM READER

CONTEMPORARY BRITISH HORROR

CINEMA: INDUSTRY, GENRE AND SOCIETY

Johnny Walker

Edinburgh University Press

This excellent overview of British horror films from the year 2000 to the present contextualizes them with the international ones. This study shows these films coming away from Hammer's gothic style (à la *The Wicker Man* in *Black*) and putting greater emphasis on contemporary societal concerns (*Island Lake*, *Attack the Block*). Scholarly but readable, informative and incisive – essential!

BEHAN DOLAN-MORRIS

THE RIM OF MORNING

William Sleace

New York Review Books

Consisting of two long-neglected novels, both originally published in the 1950s, *The Rim of Morning* is stunning. With one plot about alien possession and the other about communicating with what might be another dimension, William Sleace's tales of cosmic terror are as deft as anything written by his contemporaries. That *Science* this accomplished was almost forgotten is a tragedy to both writer and reader. Here's hoping this release rectifies things.

MICHAEL MITCHELL

SYNCHRONIZED SLEEPWALKING

Martin Mundi

Dark Arts Books

Mundi's latest collection of stories spans a wide swath of genres and themes. From the multispecies cyber-reincarnation of *Dead or Rotted* to the eager participant in the body horror of *Chlor*, each story has a new proposal for the ressed-up ways humans can destroy life. While the tales are quick-paced and consistently engaging, certain ones – especially *The Girl With a Motorcycle for a Heart* – are far too quickly

DEBBIE CHAMBERLAIN

THE NIGHT CLOCK

Paul Meloy

Solers

When a rash of bloody violence and suicide plagues mental health case Phil Trevel's town, he discovers there's something behind it all that's much more sinister than he could have ever imagined. *The Night Clock* seamlessly weaves horror, science fiction and the (very) weird into a dense, occasionally challenging narrative that's recommended to anyone who's sick of the same old (re)story.

EMILY S. SUGGLES

INTERIOR DARKNESS COLLECTS A QUARTER CENTURY OF
INTROSPECTIVE HORROR FROM BEST-SELLING AUTHOR PETER STRAUB

A MIRROR IN THE DARK

BY MICHAEL KNOST



GOOD HORROR DOESN'T HAVE TO STARTLE OR SHOCK THE READER IN ORDER TO HAVE IMPACT. In fact, it doesn't have to be grotesque or monstrous, beastly or demonic; nor does it require torture porn or ubiquitous blood and guts. Like all fiction, it need only elicit an emotional response to subtly get under the skin of the reader.

And no one does this better than Peter Straub.

Rather than focusing primarily on external elements, Straub takes us deeper. His work is like an inside mirror, allowing readers to find their own reflections in its dark imagery.

It's fitting then that the author's latest book is titled *Interior Darkness*. A wide-ranging collection of Straub's most chilling, intense and compelling tales from the past 25 years, the compilation (out February 16 from Doubleday) shows us why he's a master of the short form.

"I like the economy, the attentiveness, the sense of concentration [with short fiction]," Straub says. "The interior demand seems more piercing. And you can work with images and effects that would be unbearable over the course of a novel."

Take, for instance, Straub's "Pork Pie Hat," which features a startlingly potent reminiscence of a bygone Halloween in racially segregated America, as relayed by an old alcoholic musician. It's a compact and breathtaking tale that would certainly lose its focus and impact if pushed to novel length.

Unlike many single-author collections, which all too often retell the same story, premise or theme throughout the entire book, the tales in *Interior Darkness* are each as unique in their plot as in their approach and execution.

"I do not consciously try to emphasize the differences between works of short fiction, that seems to take care of itself," Straub notes. "What I do when writing, on the other hand, is reject those ideas that seem too familiar, or too easy, that remind me too much of the stories that used to be in *The Twilight Zone*, or in older horror anthologies. I don't like stories with obvious shapes or conclusions."

This is made abundantly clear when one surveys the works in *Interior Darkness*. Over the course of its 486 pages, we visit a city where a killer has been on the loose for years ("A Short Guide to the City"), travel with a graduate student to New York to hear the dark past of a legendary saxophonist long assumed dead (the aforementioned "Pork Pie Hat"), and meet an artistic kindergarten teacher who resorts to murder to drive home a fundamental lesson ("Autpuffte"). The variety of tones within the book are evident in stories that feature a young guru who discovers his healing powers may not be the blessing he thinks they are ("Molten the Guru"), children who talk about school teachers killing students ("Blue Rose") and a black comedy about two hit men and the karmic nature of revenge ("Mr. Cubb and Mr. Curt").

The element that connects each of these stories is that regardless of subject matter, Straub is always holding up that mirror. For instance, you may recognize yourself in such universal experiences as coping with loss or violence, dysfunctional relationships or even childhood trauma, all of which routinely creep into his fiction.

"About 30 years of work have distilled down into these shorter stories," Straub says. "And I think they present your number of strong experiences to the reader, I think they present amazement. The other thing I particularly like about *Interior Darkness* is that it seems, more than any novel can be, the direct product of my concerns."

American historian and educator Charles Austin Beard once said, "When it is dark enough, you can see the stars." And that's precisely what Straub is doing with these stories. He is allowing us to face our own demons in the darkness and find the pinpricks of light hidden within.





Found Footage Phenomenon is a broad exploration of current political climates and the fearful concept of connectivity that's being rendered onto our screens through movies that concern themselves with technology and living through a digital age. Because this topic is so large, it is difficult to define this book as one single thesis statement. Instead, it deals with everything that falls under the umbrella of "digital horror." For example, the book differentiates between what is a political reflection on the time we live in and what is mere evolution in storytelling, such as how *Paranormal Activity* is not really commenting on what it means to be a person in a computer-driven age, but instead is just a retelling of a classic haunted house story.

Among the other standout essays is James Axton's "Nightmares Outside the Mainstream," which concerns itself with the legitimacy of "hardcore horror," such as *August Underground*, and the misrepresentation of what should be defined as "horror porn." Seemingly any flaw in argument is addressed as the book progresses, such as the fact that technology has always been a topic of anxiety in pop culture and is not exclusive to recent decades. This is handily addressed in Stephen Henkle's chapter, in which he comments on the evolving perception of techno-horror throughout history. It's a necessary topic to present because it differentiates the subject matter from dated criticisms of technology. This collection of essays is extremely tight and well developed, but it's no Sunday stroll through the park. *Digital Horror* is almost uniformly a very challenging and dense read that requires more than a few sittings to finish. In fact, it leans more towards a university thesis than accessible non-fiction. But as long as the reader is willing to devote some patience, the book's content will appeal to any horror fan with interests in anthropology or the human condition.

RICHIELE CHARNETT

WELCOME TO NIGHT VALE

Joseph Fink and Jeffrey Cranor
Haper Perennial

There's something very strange happening in the southwestern United States. With the everyday appearances of things such as angels, sentient clouds and a waitress with tree branches inexplicably growing from her torso, it can be said that the small town of Night Vale certainly has its quirks. Based on the popular podcast of the same name created by Joseph Fink and Jeffrey Cranor (which has been around since 2012), the novel successfully captures the mystery and eeriness of their ongoing story, while finally unearthing a few secrets along the way.

Welcome to Night Vale mostly focuses on two characters. Jackie Fiero, an eternally seventeen-year-old pawnshop owner, and Diane Crayton, a single mother trying to raise her shoplifting teenage son, Josh, as best she can. Jackie and Diane's already bizarre lives are made even more so when a mysterious figure (speaking in ten jocular) and a devious cut-throat pawns a small slip of paper that has "KING CITY" written on it and nothing else. Driven almost to the point of insanity (as if such a thing isn't already commonplace in Night Vale), Jackie can't seem to let herself of the paper no matter what she does — throwing it out of her car window, tearing it to shreds, shoving it with it, etc. Simultaneously, Diane starts seeing Josh's estranged father whenever she goes, a conundrum made worse when her son gains an interest in rekindling their relationship.

As seasoned listeners might expect, nothing is ever fully certain within *Welcome to Night Vale*'s 401 pages, which is also true of its narrative arc. Much like community radio host Carol Palmer's programme (also appearing here between chapters to both further and detract from the plot), Fink and Cranor often allude to more than they explain. It's a tactic that has no doubt aided in making the podcast so wonderfully perplexing, though here the meandering prose can sometimes impede the plot's development. This is thankfully corrected toward the end, however, when world-building is put on the back burner and tangible explanations begin to surface. *Welcome to Night Vale* still contains some of the strangest and best material its creators have written to date.

EVAN MILLAR



LIBRARY OF THE DAMNED

REYING THURATT

Loosecraft is hard. That's not a statement about the elusiveness of his cosmic horrors (though it could be). Loosecraft is hard because he's a creator whose worldviews continue to be problematic; it's no secret, with the publication of volumes of his correspondence, that he was a racist xenophobe. Some argue that of H.P. was a product of his time, but it's no longer 1912, so what are we to do with the problem of Loosecraft?

This is the conundrum that the World Fantasy Awards have been wrestling with ever since Hachikō Dunsen won for Best Novel back in 2011. For *White Fang* Dunsen, marking the first time a black author garnered the prestigious honor. At the time, Dunsen blogged about the uncomfortable position she was put in by receiving an award — "It is the stigma of a man who perished the 1912 poem 'On the Greatest of Niggers' — writing that 'a statuette of this racist man's head is for my name. A statuette of this racist man's head is one of my greatest honors as a writer.' The call to redesign the award went out again in 2014 when writer David José Older launched an online petition supporting the change. Then, last fall, at the annual awards ceremony, it was announced that the WFA were officially rethinking the trophy design, and the real screaming began.

This subsequent outcry was led in large part by Loosecraft's twisted tales historian S.T. Joshi (in a series of vitriolic blog entries at stjoshi.org) in which he scoured cheap pag the status with a "social justice" movement to suppress the works of Loosecraft, which no one appears to have actually been supporting. After all, it's impossible that Loosecraft's body of work has been inherently influential to the evolution of genre fiction, and his more odious personal beliefs do nothing to undermine that. Furthermore, the wealth of Lovecraftian fiction that has sprung up in recent years to root and thrive, and as reported in *AMERICAN*, factions of it are even challenging and reworking some of his most problematic ideas. In essence, that's what the WFAs are trying to do as well.

Like Loosecraft, conversations about race are hard, and littered with landmines, but they are necessary because systematic and endemic racism still exists. We either walk our game to be welcoming to all or we don't. And that's why this conversation is about to reach more than just the 40-year legacy of a particular award — and no, changing its appearance doesn't diminish what winning the award meant, that's ridiculous — it's about the message the WFA want to send to current and future recipients. It's about giving the winners something they are proud to place front and center on their mantle, regardless of their heritage or skin color, because surely in 2016 there are better and more alternative ways to celebrate excellence in writing.

I for one look forward to seeing what they come up with.

MONICA S. KEENLEN

THE FRIGHT GALLERY

EDITED BY GARY PULLIN

THIS MONTH: CANDICE TRIPP'S HOUSES OF HORROR

Bricks and mortar built for terror – welcome to the horror movie houses drawn by UK fine artist Candice Tripp. Since 2014 she's been creating beautiful tributes to iconic genre movie domains, rendered in watercolours, pens and ink.

The idea for creepy houses portraits started after they had already crapt into her other work. When Tripp decided to try to do a standalone house from a horror film, she quickly realised there was ample material to draw from. Her first series features homes from *The Asylum Horror*, *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, *Melrose Place* and *Psycho*. For her second series, she created 31 pieces that range from the obscure, such as the spooky apartment complex in *The Strained* (below, right) and Auntie's house in the Japanese film *House*, to dwellings in fan favourites such as *Black Christmas* (below, left) and *It Follows* (inset).

How do you approach each house? Do you look for a personality trait or a design element you like?

My reasoning is scattered. If a movie or house fell into any of these three categories, I'm happy to use it. My favourite horrors, ones that I think are important to the genre as a whole, houses that were too integral to the plot to ignore.

How're you working at 10" x 12", which is quite a small size. Was it a challenge to draw the structure and keep everything in perspective?

Yes, my eyes are duly fucked. The boards are 10" x 12" but the painted area is only around 5" x 5". Something about their diminutive size sparks that hysterical '60s toy collector feeling in me, like you can collect them all!

I was happy to see you took Black Christmas. Was it tough finding proper reference material or did you have the covers available for screenshots?

If I believed in a higher power, I would be praising it for the internet. Thankfully, in many cases a lot of the legwork had been done for me, but trying to figure out how every house would look head-on was sometimes difficult. I bought a lot

of movies, photographed my TV (transparent screenshots might drive me to one day practice self-immolation) and though it pains me to say it, Netflix came to the rescue (xoxo).

I like the subtle humour that you've worked in, such as the oven on the roof in It Follows and the skeleton across above the Poltergeist house (below, centre). Was it hard to hold back on adding elements like those and stay focused on the design of the structures?

Oh my god, it was really difficult to hold it down. It makes me happy that you could see that I was making an effort to play by the rules. "Added extras" started with the *Suspense* guide dog, then the hanging enemy crapt into *The Dreamcatcher*. By the time I got to *Poltergeist* I felt like the house itself was so desperately ugly that I was allowed to add some semi-distracting elements.

Some of the originals have sold but will there be prints available?

I'm not keen to do prints, but I'm tentatively looking into making a book.

To follow Candice, visit candicetripp.com or @candicetripp on Instagram.



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THE GORE MET

MENU: MEAT 'N' CHEESE PLATES FROM ARROW VIDEO

Infelix, schlockmeister Umberto Lenzi's filmography is a mixed bag. *Gialli Seven Bloodstained Orchids* (1972) and *Spasmo* (1974) stand as stellar examples of the genre. Then there is the glorious trash of *Enter Alive!* (1980) and *Carvedal Ferox* (1981). Then there's the filanously awful *Down of the Dead* cash-in *Nightmare City* (1983), available now on Blu-ray courtesy of Arrow Video USA.

For starters, there isn't much of a plot. A mysterious plane lands at an airport and out of it spout helmet-faced robotlike victims to wreak havoc on the city of Madrid. The beleaguered military works to quell this infestation of blood-thirsty lunatics while the government covers it up. Much bad dubbing and rubbery gore ensues.

As terrible a film as *Nightmare City* is, it changed the rules of the zombie subgenre. It introduced the idea of the hyperactive "infected" rather than the slow-moving "undead"—a concept that admittedly worked much better in *28 Days Later* (2002). Here, they wield sticks, hatchets and machine guns, cutting a swath through an international cast that includes Hugo Stiglitz (Tinseltown) and a slow-on-the-lock Mel Ferrer (*War and Peace*).

Nightmare City was a staple of main-end-pop video stores

in the '80s as *City of the Walking Dead*, released by Continental Video, subsequently got a digital upgrade when Arrow Bay put it out on DVD as *Nightmare City* in 2002. This new Arrow Video release is problematic, though. According to the disclaimer at the beginning of the film, the original negative was damaged beyond reasonable repair, so there are two transfers included—one from the damaged negative and one from a "dupe reversal."

This means there are random unne-yellow stains on the original negative, while the dupe reversal transfer is soft in comparison. The dam-



Nightmare City

age isn't intrusive however, and the fact that the film looks like it was peed on adds to the low-rent atmosphere. The limits of film restoration are even highlighted in one of the supplements, which also include interviews with Lenzi, star Maria Rosaria Omaggio, and rumormongers on the film (from E!) Roth. (Look for the Tom Savini-directed remake next year.)

In contrast to that Lenzi standby, Joe Gannon's *Madman* (1981) has been a slasher blind spot for this ol' gorehound. The *Cade Red* DVD released in 2010 went out of print rather quickly, so it's nice to see Arrow Video—in collaboration with Vinegar Syndrome—give this the high-dol treatment.

The summer camp setting of *Friday the 13th* (1980) was an obvious influence, except that *Madman* takes place in autumn before American Thanksgiving weekend. In the opening scene, the head of the camp tells a compile tale of *Madman* Marz, a deranged local farmer who killed his family and was lynched as a result, but vanished. It's said that if you say his name out loud,

he'll come, so of course one of the campers has to try his luck, and before long comely counselors are being picked off one-by-one.

The story may be cliché, but the film is decidedly unconventional. It takes place entirely at night and was shot with a slight soft focus that grants it the surreal air of a fairy tale. The cinematography is considered and unusual, with the camera often prowling the forest floor, and Gannon also kept the titular barefoot behemoth mostly in the shadows or off-screen. This being a slasher, there's some great hot-goddess gore, including a couple of mannequin decapitations (one of which is by pickup truck hood). Also of note is the electronic score and peppy catchy instrumental theme by Stephen Hiercock, and *Down of the Dead* (1978) star Gaylen Ross as the Final Girl.

Extras include *The Legend Still Lives!*, 30 Years of *Madman*, an entertaining 91-minute documentary on the production and history of the film, *Madman Alive at 35*, a second featurette looking back on the production, *The Early Career of Gary Soto*, in which the producer reminisces about his film career, as well as interviews, trailers, two commentary tracks, and a tribute to the director and cast members who are no longer with us. Like

Nightmare City, the *Madman* Blu-ray offers a filling take on a thriller recipe, but with a couple welcome twists.





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AUDIO DROME

★★★★★ **REALLY** ★★★★★ **AMAZING** ★★★ **GOOD** ★★ **FINE** ★ **OKAY** ★★ **WORTH A TRY**

REVIEW BY KYLE GILLEY, MARK A. HANAU, JAMES VON LUTOW, DEAN PLUMMER, CHRIS NOVELLA, AND DEWEN TILSON



THE FINAL GIRLS

SCORE: B+

Gregory James Jenkins
Various Soundtracks
Gregory Jenkins' *The Final Girls* score is a deliberate yet refined collage of classic sounds with just a slight underbelly of orchestral emotion, giving this tongue-in-cheek work a bit more dramatic oomph. Over homages include the clipped *Friday the 13th* "GRI" motif, heavily sequenced synth patterns, and layers of vintage-styled chords reminiscent of Tangerine Dream, plus pulses, chimes and shimmering notes that ripple like water droplets. Yet, Jenkins keeps the score grounded with a main theme tied to a state of reflection—a re-examining the past, and soon confronting unwanted conflicts—plus some pretty juicy variations, making it clear *The Final Girls* is very much a comedy. In spite of a lagging midsection with too many short music stabs and similar stalking cues, this is a surprisingly dense collection of theme variations and great synth evocations. **B.B. MRH**



MANDOS: THE HANDS OF FATE

SCORE: B

Ross Haddock and Robert Smith Jr.
See to Stay Productions Co.
Mandos: The Hands of Fate is widely believed to be one of the worst movies ever made thanks to an appearance on *Mystery Science Theater 3000*, which of course means there isn't a single person out there who doesn't love it, and that a vinyl release

today should not be surprising. Ross Haddock and Robert Smith Jr.'s original score is entirely basic jazz using staple instrumentation, mostly serving as background filler, but there are moments of excitement, such as the uptempo "Uncontrollable Passion" and "A House Divided," and the doomy, foreboding "Desecration." What makes the *Mandos* record even weirder is that it features movie dialogue throughout, presumably because it could not be removed from the 35-min soundtrack negative. Coupled with the limited audio levels, *Mandos: The Hands of Fate* is positively smothered with 1960s low-budget music. Like the movie itself, the idea of sitting through this soundtrack sounds like a lot more fun than it really is. **B.B. AVL**



MARK OF THE DEVIL I & II

SCORE: B

Michael Hale
The War Stars Records
Gennep's *Mark of the Devil* (1973) was a video nasty before the term existed, showcasing shocking scenes of tongue-licking, run-fasting, brutality. For the music, the filmmakers turned to fellow countrymen Michael Hale, a pop hitmaker who turned in a weirdly melodic, haunting suite, full of light sensibilities that gleam at a sort of sleazy '70s soap opera vibe while calling to mind Ric Ocasek's *Cheerful Obsession*. Released a few years later, *Mark of the Devil II* has more of a classic horror sound, using music from Hammer legend Dan O'Grady (*The Abigail*), John Scott and Sam Shere, with all the grandiose classic of horror's checked-in. One Way Station's release marks the first time this double dose of sleazy soundtrack music has made it to vinyl, released in a variety of color variants and housed in a heavy gated tip-on jacket, complete with liner notes by Hale, star life Kate, and others. **B.B.B. AVL**



VIDEOGRAM

SCORE: B

Pre-Cert
Cassini
With an early track clearly paying homage to Gollin's "Zombi" theme, Videogram's latest four soundtrack, *Jre-Cert*, is a more prog-rock-adjacent work featuring heavier drums, electric guitar and synth-drones sandwiched between pounding backbeats (e.g. "Killer on Interstate 48"). Even "Camp Blood" and the tongue-in-cheek "Worship Stamp" (both riffs on Rickie's 12th with vocal effects) have a steady strut, while a subsequent "Horror Express" yields techno and rock beats that settle into a millisecond march. The longest tracks are the most satisfying, especially the twelve-minute, Carpenterian "Man in the Western Place to Hide," which allows the band to fold in a few synthetic sound effects and let droves and frantic material drill between various vintage keyboard emulations. Videogram closes almost exclusively from



SLASHER FILM FESTIVAL STRATEGY

SCORE: B

Psychic Sheriff
Death Waltz / Foreign Sounds
Slasher Film Festival Strategy (see p.56) takes the concept of a classic '80s score and its exclusive reliance on drum sequences and keyboards, and redesigns each track for a listening experience rather than echoing the actual film cues. Free from the constraints of scene lengths and stock stabs, SFFS goes into these statements, allowing basic lines and circular motifs to grow far more than a handful of hours before gradually layering additional textures. "Grim Death" isn't mellow per se, but it represents SFFS's peculiar concept of having the listener chill to the sounds of a stalk-and-slash movie.



THE BODY & KREG

SCORE: B

The Body & Kreg
As A Los Records

Following work with the likes of Haxan Cloak, Droneyoung and Thro, Rhode Island duo The Body continues down a reformatted path that has long since taken them beyond the realms of mere doom metal. The band's collaboration with US black metal act Kreg represents a sickening interweaving of nightmares that conjures vast, merged dystopias that might be metallic at heart but reference genres such as noise and industrial along the way. Things shudder and sprawl, swirling fluid and noxious gases as the interced collaborators wade through sludge and scum for exercise after exercise in soul-rending horror, much awe spurred along by Neil Jameson's persistent gurgles and Chap King's befitting shrieks at incoherence. As experiences go, it's one of infinite sorrow and infinite pain, and, depending on your strength of spirit, the suffering you endure will either leave you feeling thoroughly purified or ready to open your wrists with a kitchen knife as soon as you have the house to yourself. **B.B.B.B. AB**



LISTEN TO MY NIGHTMARE

There just isn't enough space to cover all the cool music out there these days especially, it seems horror music is bigger than ever, from intensely desecrated vinyl horror soundtracks, to legendary composers making comebacks, to more electronic rock and metal artists being influenced by the genre's pory glory days. With that in mind, here are some of my personal favorite horror music happenings from 2015, to expand upon our annual list of List.

It Follows was a divisive movie, but everyone loved Disasterpiece's electronic, synth-horror influenced score. Intentionally or not, it builds on the music in 2013's *Maniac* remake, evoking John Carpenter's pulsing synthesizer and cold atmosphere to create a record that kids were snapping up. It's official: horror soundtracks are now cool.

Speaking of Carpenter, his *Last Thems* album of original material would be right at home with any of his classic scores from *Halloween* to *Escape From New York*. He played his first-ever live concert in October 2015 – could this year see some North American gigs?

Similarly, Goblin, the Italian prog-rock band that gave life to Argento classics *Deep Red* and *Suspense*, released its first album in nearly ten years with *Four of a Kind*. Oddly, Goblin Rebirth, an offshoot project featuring two members of Goblin also emerged with a record, while Claudio Simonetti's Goblin continued to release re-recorded soundtracks including *Deep Red* for Rustlebird Records, giving us these evanescent inspirations of the band and a somewhat confused, but definitely excited, fanbase.

If that wasn't enough, Inque of Lucio Ruiz collaborator Fabio Rizol did a North American tour for the first time over, with a stop in Toronto where he and his band performed tracks from *Zombi*, *City of the Living Dead* and *The Beyond*. This rare event was the first time Ruiz played live with Goblin's Maurice Guarini, who lives in Toronto and worked on those same genre classics.

And if there's a band that I'd like to see continue, it's horror movie screenings with a live score. I spent Halloween 2015 watching *Psycho* with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra – the shrieking, dark, dark rumblings and string-based suspense of arguably the greatest horror score of all time brought it to life in rich detail.

Of course there was no shortage of genre-based releases by punk, rock and metal bands. The occult rock subgenre stayed strong, led by Ghost's *Meliora* album, but the one that got my goat was Uncle Acid & The Night Creepers on Rise Above Records. Though rooted in the stoner/boogie genre, Uncle Acid's sound is incompromisable a mix of '60s pop melody, Black Sabbath guitar and early Alice Cooper band evil with a more genuine association with horror than all those "Satan" groups. The *Night Creeper* details a grrindhouse-style narrative about a psychotic homeless man that is somehow part folk pop, part giallo, part class, all trash.



I could keep going, but as usual there's just not enough room for everything. Here's to more audio nightmares in 2016!

JAARON FIBON LUFFSON

with all the nuances slowed down for careful savoring. "Samsara-bust" has fast-tipping sounds, but the track's relaxing mood is built around rhythms that accentuate the dominant synth chords, whereas "Hasten Midnight" is driven by a Moroder-esque bass line and hand-claps, adding to the antiqueness of this high-concept forage. **B.B.B.**

MRR



DEAD WHEN I FOUND HER

All the Way Down

Asymetric Records

Like Swampy Puppy before him, American industrial musician Michael Arthur Holloway makes use of horror movie dialogue on *All the Way Down*, his third album under the moniker. The album weaves bits of *The Broad*, *The Fog*, *Twin Peaks*, *Five Weeks With Me and Ernest* & *The Menace* through his electronic drapes. Indeed, Holloway's subject matter – the ravages of age and horror of death – makes this a dark follow-up to 2012's *Reg Doll Blues*, with tempo slowed to menacing effect. He aims to reconnect the sound of mid-'80s to early '90s industrial, and he does so convincingly on Puppy sound-alikes "Threadbare" and "Gathering Fire." But Holloway is more melodic, with "Expiring Time" and "Gownpour" more akin to *Discharge* Made. Very much the sum of his influences, he looks back musically in order to cast light on what lies ahead for all of us. **B.B.B.** SP



AUTOPSY

Death Grinder

Placidville

Back in the day, death metal had no rulebook, allowing for pioneers such

as Autopsy to develop a distinctive sound, incorporating the speed and guttural vocals of extreme thrash with both the hearse-pace of Black Sabbath and a dark lyrical mood of horror – like dropping a few tabs only to find your world overrun by shambling and sprinting zombies from both versions of *Raise of the Dead*. This time around, the band actually closes the veil between these two worlds: vinyl purchases will find the A-side more traditionally, viciously, death metal, with the B-side drenched in funeral doom vibes and accents of dark psychedelia. Whenever side you choose, you're not feeling the need for a shower as badly as Jennifer Connelly's character escaping the body pool in *Argento's Phenomena* – before diving right back in, of course. **B.B.B.** GT



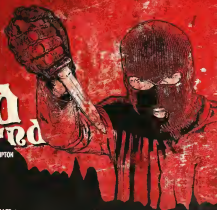
NORBOD TALE: A TRIBUTE TO CELTIC FROST

Northern Artists

Genet Flower Records

Released as a companion to a massive Celtic Frost tribute comes this collection of career-spanning covers gathers a varied group of heavy metal luminaries. Phil Anselmo and his protégés *Chloride* take it off with a torrid rendition of "Uncanny," while death/doom upstarts *Temple of Void* bring extra heft and dread to "De Azyrie Vel Death." While 1988's still-said glass album *Cold Lake* remains a popular joke among metalheads, horror metal vets in Acid Witch strike "Cherry Bombs" their own as a fun, sleazy romp. Party thrashers *Blasphemous Womb* take "Nocturnal Fear" from the original *Noroid Tales EP* and give it some welcome bottom end, along with a worthy take on its mooseblee linkdowns. Fanatic doom institution *Evoken* drags "Dance of Meggiste" down to a glacial pace, its signature keyboards imitating the track with a mournful overture. Cover albums miss more often than they hit, but *Noroid Tales* gets it right. **B.B.B.** GR

FROM FAILED MISSIONS TO MARS TO
CANNIBAL WITCHES, ONE-MAN ELECTRONIC
OUTFIT SLASHER FILM FESTIVAL STRATEGY
CRAFTS FAUX FILM SCORES THAT TRAVERSE
THE GENRE



Found Underground

AARON YOM LUPTON

WHILE HORROR SOUNDTRACK MUSIC HAS COMPELLED NUMEROUS ARTISTS TO RELEASE ALBUMS INFLUENCED BY '80s ELECTRONIC SCORES IN RECENT YEARS, SOME BANDS HAVE BEEN AT IT FOR A WHILE NOW IN THE UNDERGROUND SCENE TO LESSER ACCLAIM. Slasher Film Festival Strategy, a one-man project by South Carolina's Christopher Ashley, has released four soundtrack music using synthesizers, drum machines and samplers since the late '90s, and is set to become one of the more recognized names in the scene with its new album *Psycho Shield* on the Death Wish Records Co. label. As Ashley explains, the musical background that led him to the world of soundtrack music began in an unlikely place.

"In 1997, I was playing in a noisy hardcore band and was heavily influenced by what was happening with hardcore and power-violence crossing over into noise/electronic territory," he says. "Hardcore bands like Monie in the Basement and others like Code Must Induce were influential in leading me down a more forward-thinking path. While I was still playing in hardcore bands, I would record electronic compositions. I wasn't too aware of film music outside of experiencing it while watching film, so I really thought that would be an interesting avenue to approach. My friend sent me a copy of the *Halloween* soundtrack and I immediately became immersed after fully experiencing film music as a stand-alone product. In January 1999 I recorded *Music for the Hearing Impaired*, which was a soundtrack for an imagined film. That is pretty much how *Slasher Film Festival Strategy* was born."

During those early days, when Ashley experimented with electronics and continued to discover the horror scores that would come to influence his music, he found himself shifting away from the metallic hardcore scene in. In 2001, *Slasher Film Festival Strategy* recorded a split with *Barbed Nose*, the noise/power electronic band that binned out of the ashes of *Monie in the Basement*.

But it was 2013's *Crusian Throne* (on Ashley's own black metal/noise electronics label Foreign Soundz) that first put SFFS on the map, when a

track that Ashley posted online caught the attention of Death Wish's Spencer Hickman. The album functions as a soundtrack to an imaginary sci-fi horror movie about a failed mission to Mars. Hickman shared the music on social media and a relationship between he and Ashley soon formed. The following year Ashley released *Wet Leather*, an album directly influenced by slasher movies, both in sound and art design.

"I watched a lot of slasher films while working on *Wet Leather*," he says. "Most of the album was recorded at the same time as the sci-fi *Crusian Throne*, so I wanted to explore two different worlds. *Wet Leather* was designed to be an imaginary film score to a revenge slasher flick."

The recently released *Psycho Shield* album (see review p. 57) is SFFS's first vinyl release with Death Wishz. Ashley also believes it is his most ambitious effort to date.

"*Psycho Shield* is based on an unrealized film of the same title about a coven of cannibalistic witches that turns its violence into a religious cult in order to absorb the power of their flesh. I intentionally avoided listening to electronic music so I wasn't influenced while producing it. I was actually more immersed in metal during that time. There are touches of old-wave, goth, ambient and even '80s pop music on *Psycho Shield*, in addition to the soundtrack-style tracks."

Next up for SFFS is a collaboration with similar horror score-influenced outfit *Penitence Home Video*, an album of reworked outtakes from the *Crusian Throne* sessions called *Crusian Covers*, and a new full-length album by October 2018. While Ashley is surprised by the newfound interest in his music, he feels horror soundtracks deserve their due.

"The soundtrack community has become pretty rigid. In a selfish way, it's sort of annoying because now it's harder to acquire some of the releases I want, where that wasn't the case collecting records fifteen years ago. With anything, too much of something can run a good thing, but I don't think we see there quite yet."



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THE MOST DANGEROUS GAME

ERNEST B. SCHOEDSACK AND IRVING Pichel & USA - 1932

One can only imagine what the arbiters of taste made of *The Most Dangerous Game* upon its release nearly 85 years ago. A revolutionary exercise in Sadean horror and high adventure, it remains one of the most significant and enduring works in genre history. Based on the 1924 short story "The Hounds of Zerkoff," written by former advertising copywriter Richard Connell, the nail-biting screen adaptation by Ernest B. Schoedsack and Irving Pichel was initially budgeted at \$400,000, before a financially anxious RKO halved that figure prior to the commencement of principal photography on May 18, 1932. Pichel, with his background as an actor, served only as dialogue director, whilst Schoedsack, who apparently used a stopwatch when shooting the breathless chase sequences, helmed all the action.

The result is an exhilaratingly swift 63 minutes that begins with a cabin cruiser being scuttled off the coast and shark-infested waters of Blank Island (named Ship Trap Island in Connell's original tale). The sole survivor is big game hunter and author Bob Rainsford (Joel McCrea), who swells to share and is welcomed as a guest of Count Zerkoff (Ludwig Stöckmann), the urbane owner of the isolated Isle who shares his gothic fortress with several gloomy attendants, including the mute manservant Ivan (Nobie Johnson). The Countess introduces Rainsford to his other guests, the alluring Eve Trowbridge (Fay Wray) and her alcoholic brother, Marko (Robert Armstrong), both survivors of an earlier shipwreck. Gathering these companions in the opulent living room, Zerkoff begins to detail his all-encompassing passion for hunting.

After confessing that conventional hunting was beginning to bore him, the Russian noble reveals he has reclaimed his love of the sport by inventing "a new sensation," the pursuit of the most cunning prey on Earth — man. Believing he has lured a kindred spirit in Rainsford, Zerkoff is disturbed when the square-jawed Yankee rejects his offer to join him in hunting down human game. This refusal to participate as the hunter means Rainsford must now become the hunted. Released with a twelve-hour head start, he and Eve (who Zerkoff promises only to capture as he does not kill "the female animal") plunge into the island's dense jungle, knowing that if they can elude the count from midnight till sunrise they have won their freedom. If not, Rainsford's

handsome head will be the latest to adorn Zerkoff's gruesome trophy room. With its striped-back narrative and scar-faced villain-own-soul killer, *The Most Dangerous Game* is the progenitor of the sunning horror film and inaugurated a new level of psychological realism in Hollywood movies. Zerkoff's fabledomic impulse for hunting strongly indicates that violence and

death are the twin engines that drive him sexually — a pathology that is articulated with his fabled collection of "Kills, then love!" Schoedsack and Pichel's hermetic vision rears surrenders to head-ached momentum and often effectuates images of startling intensity. Indeed, the sequences where Rainsford and Eve first enter the forbidding chamber of Zerkoff's trophy room by candlelight and glimpse his collection of desiccated heads "looking in jars and haunted on walls, still carries a tangible frisson."

The mythic resonance of Connell's story has assisted in making *The Most Dangerous Game* an inexhaustible source for generations of authors and filmmakers. Remade in 1943 as *A Game of Death* (reusing footage from the original) and again in 1956 as *Rain for the Sun* the film's unceasing influence is so far-reaching a definitive list is difficult to compile. A mere smattering of its offspring includes *Bloodlust* (1961), *The Naked Prey* (1966), *Without Warning* (1982), *Turkey Shoot* (1982), *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991), *Hard Target* (1993), *Battle Royale* (2000), *Mad Hunter* (2004) and *Predators* (2010).

It has also inspired books such as Stephen King's *The Running Man* and Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games* series, as well as episodes of *Gilligan's Island* ("The Hunter"), *Star Trek* ("Arise") and *Law & Order* ("Hunting Ground").

Six months after the release of *The Most Dangerous Game*, Schoedsack

would build upon the film's solid box office by delivering another unimpeachable masterpiece for RKO in *King Kong* (co-directing on this occasion with Merian C. Cooper). Reuniting with actors Wray, Armstrong and Johnson, as well as composer Max Steiner, Schoedsack also recycled the jungle sets from his previous picture to save on production costs. Despite still residing somewhat antlerly in the shadow of its comic successor, *The Most Dangerous Game* represents the acme of a chthonic horror cinema.

MICHAEL DOYLE



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